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TYLNEY HALL.

VOL. III.

TYLNEY HALL.

BY THOMAS HOOD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MDCCCXXXIV.

spear; so did Raby recover from the stupor of the first shock but to a more piercing sense of anguish, as he became fully aware of the miserable deed he had done. He stood entranced—motionless and mute, for words are inadequate to such woes. There are intense moments when man becomes a giant in suffering, and needs a Titanic language to vent such enormous sorrow, stupendous horror, and vast despair. The earth seemed reeling beneath him, the sky was whirling round his head, and his ears were stunned as with the rushing of mighty waters. It was an appalling mood of mind, to which nothing could bring relief but instant madness, by deluding his sense of sight and translating the bleeding object before him into some less terrible vision.

The movement of St. Kitts, who ran and raised up the sufferer in a sitting posture, restored the wretched fratricide to recollection. With an indescribable cry he rushed and threw himself on his knees before his brother, eagerly gazing with his face opposed to the dying one, gasping by sympathy as he gasped, and unconsciously copying

every convulsive working of the features with frightful fidelity. "Speak to me, Ringwood," he murmured, "speak, for the love of Christ!" but the answer was the mortal rattle in the throat, the eyes suddenly grew opaque, and the head dropped on the bosom. The charge had been received in the chest, and the blood flowing inwardly, had filled the lungs.

"There passed the spirit!" said the Creole, with a natural shudder; "he is dead."

"Oh no—no—no," groaned Raby, and instinctively he passed his hand from the mouth to the wrist, and thence to the heart; but there was no breath, no pulsation, and Hope, which had prompted the test, recoiled with the benumbing shiver which nothing but the contact of Death, that awful torpedo, can communicate. His whole frame shook with a violence that threatened dissolution; a cold sweat broke out in large beads upon his brow—nature could bear no more; and clasping his bursting temples between his hands, he dropped like a stone upon the turf.

From this swoon he was recovered by St. Kitts,

and for some minutes his look was so vague and vacant, and his brow so calm, that reason seemed actually to have merged in idiotcy; but as the cruel truth again dawned upon him, he fell into the former ecstasy, and springing to his feet, and wildly stretching his arms abroad, as if in appeal to the whole wide earth and sky, he burst into a melancholy cry of "Oh God! what shall I do!" and again, and again, and again it was repeated, as a thousand diverging thoughts concentred afresh in the same dreadful focus.

"You must fly," said the Creole, in a thrilling whisper, as if the Avenger of Blood were already at hand. "This will be called murder—would to heaven, Raby, you had lived on better terms with your brother!"

"Oh, it is too true!" exclaimed Raby, wringing his hands till the blood started under the nails, as he resigned himself to the pangs of that bitter self-reproach with which the living are apt to contemplate all bygone differences with the dead. "But I loved him—better than my own life. I loved him—and oh, that I were now lying there

in his stead! Yes," he continued, "he was good, kind, generous, noble—the best of brothers;" and grasping the lifeless hand, he rivetted his eyes on the pallid features, now settling into a placid smile, as frequently happens to the physiognomy, where death has resulted from a gun-shot wound.

"Raby," said the Creole, and his voice sounded supernaturally hollow—"the dead are dead, and the living must not be lost—rise up and away!"

"No," replied Raby, "I will not stir. Come what may, this is my proper place, and till the tomb bars me from him, thus will I sit at his head as his chief mourner."

"This is mere madness," replied the Creole, in a sharper tone, and with a gesture of impatience. "The cry of murder will rise hotly against you—blood will demand blood—and your own parent even will not be able to save you. One son is gone, and if another must follow, at least spare us the spectacle of an ignominious death. For your father's sake—for the sake of one still dearer—"

Raby groaned at this new blow, and dropped his brother's hand. Mechanically he rose up and

turned his eyes towards Hawksley, and scalding tears for the first time gushed from the parched lids, as he thought of the young, fond, joyous heart he was doomed to break. Something he tried to say, but the sound died upon his lips; his head drooped, his arms dropped powerless by his side, and he assumed at once the despairing attitude and expression of a wretch who had just stepped irretrievably over the threshold of that tremendous portal, in Dante, beyond which hope has not even a name.

"Hark—a shot!" exclaimed the Creole, in an undertone; "the keeper is going his rounds—if you remain here you are lost;" and he seized the arm of Raby, and partly by force led him from the fatal spot. The condition of the latter was truly pitiable, and to estimate it the reader must consider not merely the harrowing circumstances of the time, but the peculiar morbid sensibility and constitutional nervous temperament of the individual, which combined to deprive him of all ordinary firmness. In utter prostration of mind and body, with a complete paralysis of purpose, and

the absolute apathy of despair, he implicitly abandoned himself to the guidance of St. Kitts, acquiescing with child-like obedience in his suggestions, and even servilely imitating the motions and gestures of his conductor. From a rational being he seemed at once reduced to passive imbecility—a mere automaton with no original motive or springs of action—but abjectly dependent on the will of another. As they passed across the open space to regain the hill, the Creole pointed to a dead rabbit that lay on the grass, with the blood still fresh upon a small wound on the nape of the neck.

"There lies the germ of this calamity," he said; "a pole-cat has been here recently, and Ringwood was watching for it in the fern."

Raby made no answer, but abstractedly stooped and picked up the rabbit, and would have carried it away with him if St. Kitts had not taken it from his helpless hand and thrown it into the bushes. The slayer was almost as unconscious as the slain; the blow had stunned him, and reduced all his faculties to a state of torpor; he heard, without

comprehending, the representations that were made to him of the necessity of flight, but blindly hurried on with fixed bewildered eyes and open mouthed, like a somnambulist under the influence of a horrid dream.

Their course lay through a plantation on the verge of the estate, the Creole cautiously leading in an opposite direction to that in which an occasional shot indicated the course of the gamekeeper. At length they reached a sequestered spot called the Dell-hole, from a circular hollow in the midst, a notorious haunt of the woodcock, and but a few paces distant from a furze hedge and a dry ditch which divided this part of the enclosed land from the open forest. Here St. Kitts made a sudden halt, and addressed his stupified companion in a tone of solemn decision.

"Raby, rouse yourself and listen: this is no time to juggle you with vain hopes, or to lull you with a mockery of comfort, or to blind your eyes with false views of the past or the future. One bolt has fallen, and another is in the air redder and fiercer even than the first,—one that will burst on

the heads that are dearest to you with tenfold ruin. Ringwood is gone, but he died not the death of a felon. There may be comfort for one calamity, but the other will bring down grey hairs to the grave with disgrace as well as sorrow. It is a bitter doom, but you must fly! yes, fly your country! My heart bleeds for you, but the scaffold must be shunned, even were you to become an exile for ever. Would to God you had been the first-born of your father, the heir of his estates,—but for the younger to kill the elder!—we live in a cruel world, Raby, and the evil-minded will hint at murder and quote precedents. Innocence will be stained like guilt; public justice will be clamorous for atonement, and the rash verdict of passion and prejudice may direct the very lands of your forefathers to be polluted by the erection of a gibbet. No, you must fly this infamy. I know the ties that bind you, but for the sake of Grace Rivers herself, you will fly, though it should it be as the breaking of your heart-strings; let her weep but not blush for you. Away, ere it be too late; away, ere your brow be stamped for ever with the

brand of Cain. After a lapse of years suspicion may revise its thoughts, and judgment may reverse its verdict; but till then you must shun a certain doom, and ignominy worse than death!"

During this discourse the unfortunate being it was addressed to became gradually conscious of its purport, and as his mind comprehended the bitter and apparently inevitable alternative that was proposed to him, the workings of his countenance expressed how excruciating were the pangs that racked his heart and brain, as he contemplated and acknowledged the stern necessity of an instant separation from all that remained to him in life or love.

It was once affirmed by a lady who had been recovered from drowning, that during the hovering of her spirit, as it were, between two worlds, she had a revelation of her past life, even in its minutest incidents, spread before her inward eye like a pictorial chart, long forgotten circumstances displaying themselves as vividly as at the time of their actual occurrence. Even thus did Raby's prophetical imagination place before him in one

vast design the dark prospect of the future, with all its sombre architecture, terrible as the Hall of Eblis, peopled with dreadful shapes of misery and despair. The drooping form of his bereaved parent, the decay of his widowed aunt, and the withering decline of Grace, all the weary woe and progressive effects of years, were forestalled in a moment, and his soul was stricken beforehand with the hopeless grief of the mourner, and the marble chill of the tomb. The thought of tearing himself from such ties was agony; but in another compartment of the same gloomy vision he beheld the opprobrious gibbet, with his own infamous remains swinging aloft, and given for a prey, like carrion, to the fowls of the air. He saw the fiends of Hatred, Malice, and Scorn, dancing and gibbering round the fatal tree, and dragging his parent, and another distracted figure, to gaze on the hideous spectacle. Even yet he might have wavered, but for a startling voice that came breathing terrible words of accusation and denunciation, as if epitomising the execrations of the world, and pronouncing its sentence.

"Away!" it cried; "away, you foul murderer, you cruel Cain, stained with a brother's blood!" and the brown woman stood suddenly before him, with her arms waving aloft, her hair streaming, and her eyes flashing, like a Pythoness in her frenzy of divination. "Away to the desert,—herd with the lion, that preys on humankind, and with the tiger, that thirsts for gore; for they are your fit mates. Away with the vampire, away into utter darkness,—hide yourself at the ends of the earth, —begone to the savage and the cannibal, where slaying in cool blood is a merit, and may make you the chief of a horde. The beam is hewn, and the hemp is spun, that shall strangle you, and the iron is welded that is to hang you in chains."

"This is horrible," said the Creole, with a look of appeal towards Raby. "The public voice speaks through her. Take the warning, and fly."

"Oh, I must—I must," wildly exclaimed their wretched auditor; "but where—whither?"

"To London," answered the Creole. "Go to Woodley, of Maudlin's; he lives in St. James's Street. You shall hear from me there,—and then

the first ship for Africa or America will be the best."

"Oh! my poor father,—and Grace," murmured Raby. "What! away for ever—to another world—without a word, a farewell; I cannot, St. Kitts, I cannot."

"Stay, then, and bid them farewell from the gallows," resumed the woman. "Stay another hour, and death and infamy will be laid like blood-hounds upon your track; stay, and see the grey hairs of your father grovelling in the dust, and the brown locks of Grace Rivers plucked out by handfuls, as if that would save her from madness. Aye, *there* is the sting of the scorpion; but did I not tell you, that you should curse the day, and the hour of the day, that linked her fate with your own?"

"And the evil hour when I was born," added the fratricide. "Oh, that hand—that cruel right hand," and he held the criminal member as far from him as he could, "it has lost me for ever. Why, oh why, St. Kitts, was it directed against my brother?"

"You saw as much as I did," answered the Creole; "but this is no time to combat vague suspicions. You will have enough to do to ward off those which may be aimed at yourself. Hark! away for the love of God; that last shot was close at hand."

"Away," echoed the brown woman; "away, and pull foot at once; fly from death and vengeance! They are coming, they are coming. Strike out for life, for you are swimming beside the shark!" and she dramatised the passion of fear so vividly by voice, feature, and gesture, that under a sudden impulse of terror the tortured bewildered Raby darted off towards the hedge, plunged through the furze, rushed across the ditch, and with the headlong flight of desperation ran at random, struggling and crashing, through the underwood of the forest.

As soon as he was out of sight, Marguerite turned round to the Creole, and addressed him in a low feeble voice, marvellously altered from the exalted tone she had so lately assumed. But she obtained no answer. St. Kitts stood abstractedly,

with his eyes fixed on the spot where his unfortunate cousin had disappeared, and his lips quivered, and his whole frame was agitated by a visible tremor. The woman observed these symptoms of discomposure, which she attributed, perhaps truly, to compunctious visitings, and her voice became stronger and sharper under the obvious excitement of irritation.

"I said, Walter, that I have been ill."

St. Kitts slowly turned, without answering, and gazed on her figure, which was incredibly emaciated since their last interview. Her bare arms were literally like mere bones covered with parchment, and the long discoloured hands, with their meagre fingers and obtrusive joints, were as those of a skeleton. Her face, especially, was miserably altered; the nose was sharp, glossy, and pointed; the lips pale, and thin, and shrunken, so as to expose the teeth; the cheeks hollow, and the cheek-bones were unnaturally prominent. It would have been the aspect of a corpse, but for two restless black eyes, which from their deep sunken

sockets still sparkled with their usual unquiet radiance.

"You are sadly changed, Marguerite," he said. "Your illness must have been severe, indeed."

"As severe," answered the woman, "as nature could well bear. Death has been wooing me, and nearly won me, too, or you would have met me ere this. Do you think, Walter, I could otherwise have remained idle with such doings at the Hall? They have prepared a rare show for a birth-day, like the Jamaica revel at a New-Year; but where is the chief puppet?" she added, with a sort of chuckle, "where is their John Canoe?"

"He lies low enough," answered the Creole, thoughtfully; "a spectacle to damp all thoughts of mirth for long years to come."

"Aye, truly," said the woman, "and could I but have crawled like a toad, I would have brought my own share of venom to poison their mirth; but I was crippled hand and foot. The very thought of my helplessness maddened me. I believe I was delirious, and raved; but do not start, Hennessy's

Hut is seeure from eaves-droppers. Had I died there, it would be unknown to any living soul whether my last breath was spent in cursing or blessing, in blasphemies or in prayers."

"It is dreadful to think of," exclaimed the Creole, his mind, Janus like, looking at once towards the past and the future, and anticipating the afflicting scene that would ensue from the introduction of the dead to the living.

"It *was* dreadful," said the woman, mistaking the source of his emotion, "as dreadful as disease, destitution, and darkness, could make it, with death in the background. Alone and helpless, racked with pain, scorched with fever, and parched with thirst, delirious, and tortured by hellish dreams, I called, Walter Tyrrel, on you; to you I prayed, and through you, and for you only, I feel that I recovered and am now in life. The thought of Walter Tyrrel flitted like a firefly across the gloom of death. But for him, I should sink under the flood of my afflictions, or lift my head above the waters, like the alligator, only to sigh."

"And I must be a crocodile myself," said the

Creole, giving her last simile a new direction, "and pretend to shed tears over the very victim I coveted."

"Aye," said the woman, "and echo the song of sorrow like a mocking-bird. I could teach you the notes, but you need little help from me either of head or hand. Your blow, Walter, was well struck—safely and surely."

"If you mean my cousin's death," answered the Creole, "I had no more hand in it than the man that will measure him for his coffin."

"Or the John Crow in hanging a Maroon," retorted the woman, "but who nevertheless turns death to account, and makes a feast upon the carcass. His fall will aid your rise, and the spiriting away of Raby will leave you free to love, without that sensitive plant in the pasture. One more remove, and, Sir Walter Tyrrel, I wish you joy! The father that outlives this must be made of the nether millstone; but if he be, a charmed egg may be laid at his door. And now go and bury your dead, and call the rabble tenantry to a gloomier feast than they expected. If they have

a dance now, it must be in cloaks and scarfs. It will look as black," she said, smiling malignantly, "as a Dignity Ball!"

So saying, she indulged in her usual embrace, and then, with less than her accustomed agility, she made off through the gap in the hedge which Raby had left in his flight. Her words had made a deep impression on the Creole. Whether he had discerned Ringwood amongst the fern, and immediately concerted his destruction, must remain a secret impenetrable to all, save the Omniscient Searcher of the human heart; but his subsequent address and counsel to Raby seemed too certainly to prove, as his stepmother inferred, that he had studied to turn the tragedy to his own benefit. With all her knowledge of his implacable hatred against the deceased,—with all her participation in his guilty aspirings,—and in spite of her own sinister promptings, she acquitted him of every thing but the secondary sin of rejoicing in the death of his enemy.

> "The very head and front of his offending
> Had this extent—no more."

On the other hand, the progress of his own advancement in life and love had been adroitly urged; the very tone of levity even with which the calamity had been mentioned, contributed to deaden whatever natural feeling had been excited by the catastrophe, and with a considerable degree of composure St. Kitts proceeded in search of the gamekeeper, to give him directions for the removal of the dead body. Guided by the report of the gun, he soon found old Mat, whom he led to the melancholy spot where the lifeless body of his young master lay stiffening in its gore.

"Oh! my God," exclaimed the aged forester, as he gazed at the horrid spectacle, "when will there be an end to accidents with guns? Look at his chest; he must have been leaning on the muzzle. Many a time and oft I warned him against the like."

"It was no accident," said the Creole.

"No accident!" exclaimed old Mat, with astonishment, "but sure enough here's his own gun lying in the fern, loaded and primed."

"And yonder you'll find another," said the

Creole, pointing towards a clump of bushes, " with the pan open and the barrel empty."

The gamekeeper proceeded to the spot, and to his amazement picked up a weapon which his eye instantly recognised. " This is a different sort of gun," he said, as he carried it in his hand to the Creole, " to what I looked for. I thought mayhap to find an old musket with a barrel as rusty as any thing, and a lock as would go off at half-cock, such a one as I took away from Black Will."

" No, it was no poacher work, Matthew," said the Creole, with a voice of real or affected distress, " it was a nearer and dearer hand that effected his death."

" Good heavens ! " exclaimed the gamekeeper, taking the Creole's hand with a look of deep commiseration, " is it possible, Mr. Walter, you have been so misfortunate ? Why you will be wretched and heart-broke all the days of your life."

" No—his brother,—his brother ! "—said the Creole, hastily, whilst the old man absolutely gasped with surprise and horror at the communication.

"What, Master Raby!" he exclaimed at length, "him as hated a gun, and cried out agin shooting all as one as murder!—what the holy could take *him* a sporting?"

"You will know all in time," answered St. Kitts, with a solemnity and significance that at once excited the alarm and curiosity of the forester. "But now call your men."

Old Mat obeyed, and put his horn to his lips; and since the days of Robin Hood, so sorry a call, in more senses than one, was never wound; it was a harsh, unmusical blast, untruly pitched, and abruptly broken off by a sudden sigh, that bespoke the heavy heart of the blower. "I have never dropped a tear afore," he said, brushing one away from his eyes, "since my own poor boy died at sea. I've kep 'em down for thirty year, but they're come at last," and the grey-headed woodman wept till his broad chest heaved with sobs as he bent over the beloved remains of the once gay, generous, and gallant Ringwood.

"And where be that wretched boy, Raby?" he inquired, when, after an interval, he had mastered

the first burst of grief,—" where have he hid his miserable head?"

" He is far enough off by this time, I hope," replied the Creole, " to elude all pursuit."

The word pursuit struck on the ear of the old retainer like a knell that sounded for the whole family of Tyrrel. " Foul play!" he ejaculated in an undertone, " then God help Sir Mark! the load was heavy enough afore, but this double charge will blow him to nothing." The under-keepers now came up, and with faces and exclamations of wonder, horror, and grief, looked from the corpse at each other; but the prudent senior repressed their questions, and directing them to cut down a few branches, a sort of rude litter was formed, on which they carried the body towards the Hall, whilst the Creole, accompanied by Mat, hastened before to prepare its inmates for the reception of the mournful procession.

" Old Mat is deuced close upon it," remarked Tom, a sharp, shrewd fellow, to his mates, at a momentary halt they made with the bier; " but to my mind this bloody business has something ugly

at the bottom on it. If them there wasn't shot-holes, I'd clap my finger on my nose, and say barkers. Well, nobody knows,—the truth's snug enough at this present, but it may come out some day, as the man said when his ferret was laid up in a rabbit-burrow."

"And for my part," answered Sam, a fellow of obtuser capacity than the former, and withal somewhat superstitious, "I think you're holding straight at it, that's sartin. Look up west about, lad, at the sun settin,—he's like a clot of blood, be'ant un? and the light's more like hell-fire, as the ranter talks on, than what's natural,—there's been summut done to make God Almighty angersome,—mark my words on it."

The western sky, in accordance with the last speaker's description, had really assumed an awful and ominous appearance. The glowing sun, as if a visible type of the All-seeing Eye, "red with uncommon wrath," slowly withdrew behind a stupendous range of dense, pitch-black, mountainous clouds, from whose rugged crests ascended jets of blood-red flame, and causing a lurid glow up to the

very zenith, whilst enormous breaks and fissures in the dark volcanic mass served to disclose the intense ardent fires that glowed within, suggesting a comparison with those nameless flames to which the rustic had alluded. Fantastic clouds of a lighter texture, and portentous colours, in the mean time ascended rapidly from the horizon, and congregated overhead in threatening masses. Peals of distant thunder muttered from all quarters at once, as unintermitting almost as the roar of the ocean. The wind rushing in fitful gusts through the forest, filled the air with unearthly moans, and sighs, and whisperings; and the dead leaves rose and whirled in rings, as if following the skirts of the weird beings who are said to dance at the approach of tempest and human desolation. Now and then a solitary drop, inordinately large, fell heavily on the path, like those few enormous tears which Nature, according to Milton,

"Wept at completion of the mortal sin."

Quelled by the foreboding spirit of the time, the stoutest heart suffered a depression,—the bold,

the reckless, and the boisterous, walked in serious silence, while the wild animals forgot their fear of man in a more absorbing terror. The hare lingered on the path,—the deer scarcely stirred,—and the bird sat stedfast on the bough, with one anxious eye turned upward at the troubled heavens.

As quickly as their mournful burden would permit, the men hurried on their course, but even at midway the forked lightning began to play around, followed at still shortening intervals by deafening crashes, that were multiplied by the surrounding echoes, till rival giants seemed defying each other from hill to hill. Fierce squalls of wind tore the leaves from the boughs, and occasional flaws of sleet and blinding hail flew along, and sometimes returned with a veering blast. A dismal gloom, not gradual, but sudden, came on,—a strange sombre opaque shadow, like that of a total eclipse of the sun, which, in conjunction with the dazzling of the lightning, completely bewildered the eye, and more than once the bearers stumbled as they groped their dreary way, associated with a corpse, as it were through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

The two heralds in advance, in the mean time, sped onward to the Hall, and just as they gained the shelter of its devoted roof, the storm burst in all its fury, the heavens opened and discharged sheets of blue and red flame, with explosions that shook the house to its foundation. The wind roared and raged with terrific violence,—doors slammed,—casements burst open, and the fierce hail dashed in the glass of those that remained fastened,—the curtains streamed wildly, and the carpets rose in billows. Such was the aspect of the drawing-room when the Creole entered it, followed by the gamekeeper; and amidst this tumult of appalling noises, a few low words, infinitely more terrible and stunning than the whole uproar of sound without, informed the heart-stricken Sir Mark that he was worse than childless, and raised a tempest of conflicting human passions that rivalled the war of the elements in violence, and was doomed long—long to outlast it in duration.

At such a climax in Tragedy, the Dramatist considerately drops his curtain: and with a similar

feeling the Author will proceed no further with his description; but leaves the domestic desolation for the Reader to picture, as forcibly and circumstantially as his imagination may suggest, or his sensibility allow.

CHAPTER II.

My Father!
Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees.
Oh, if you ever wish to see me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy;
When, as I prattling twined around your neck,
You snatch'd me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,
And, melting, said you saw my mother there,
Oh! save me from that worst severity
Of fate! Oh, outrage not my breaking heart
To that degree! I cannot—'tis impossible,
So soon withdraw it,—give it to another.

TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

Man proposes, but God disposes.

OLD PROVERB.

"IN the midst of life," says the Psalmist, "we are in death,"—a sentence the designer of Quarles's Emblems has illustrated by representing a little figure of a man enclosed within the ribs of a gigantic skeleton, like a bird in a cage. Little indeed

did Justice Rivers think, on the very morning of the day which ended so fearfully, that the bars of that awful prison-house were closing around his adopted son-in-law, whom he lately beheld in the prime of youth, health, and vigour: on the contrary, the Magistrate, in the pride and joy of his heart, selected that very evening as the fittest opportunity to inform his daughter of the very eligible election he had made on her behalf. Accordingly, as soon as the cloth was removed after dinner, he introduced the topic of marriage with a pompousness of diction and authoritative manner, such as Dr. Johnson might have used had George the Third thought proper to make him one of his justices of the peace. As we have now happily progressed beyond the formal observances of those times when sons knelt for blessings, and daughters curtseyed dutifully to ordained lovers, the oration need not be preserved at full length for the benefit of the rising generation. He proved very satisfactorily, he thought, that no happy or well-constituted marriage could ever take place without the intervention of parents, and with many needless professions he de-

clared he was ready and determined, as a devoted father, to do his own duty to the uttermost, in providing a partner for his daughter who should be every way unexceptionable to himself. This part of the subject led naturally to a flaming eulogium of Ringwood, which somehow or other glided off into a panegyric on the Tylney estates, and an enumeration of the advantages that would result from their connection with those of Hawksley. To all this tedious harangue, poor Grace listened with the distressed, reluctant, revolting face of an indigent patient, who has not only received a long nauseous prescription, but is obliged to wait personally at the apothecary's, and witness the process of its making up. Luckily, the orator was too much absorbed in his own eloquence to notice these symptoms; but at last came a summing up and a conclusion: and an awkward silence ensued as he looked vainly for something equivalent to the approving hum which in Cromwell's time used to greet the termination of an unctuous and well relished sermon. His auditor looked disturbed, vexed, and perplexed; and in a much plainer style

of language than he had lately used, he asked her abruptly what possible reason, or shadow of a reason, she had to urge against the match he proposed.

"Did she object to Ringwood's person?"

"No."

"Or his morals?"

"No."

"Did she dislike Sir Mark?"

"Quite the contrary."

"Didn't she admire the Hall?"

"Yes."

"And the grounds?"

"Extremely."

"Were not the estates contiguous?"

"Most assuredly, but ——"

And Grace was preparing to show cause against the rule, when she was stopped by a fresh series of questions, none of which seemed to the Justice to require an answer, and therefore he allowed no time for reply. For instance, had she no sense of the obligations of duty, affection, gratitude, society, and common sense?—did she presume on his own

too great tenderness, or the absence of a mother's authority, or that she could judge of her own interest better than a father?—was she really inclined to be disinherited, or only affecting a little maidenly modesty?—or had she been novel-reading?—with many other such queries; so that before they came to an end, Grace had divided and subdivided the paring of an apple into the smallest possible shreds. With a faltering voice she stammered out a profession of filial love and duty, qualified, however, with a reservation in favour of affections not under our own control, — which availed her but little. The stern magistrate had no more notion of such uncontrollable affections, than of uncontrollable vagrants, whilst there was a special statute which subjected all such wanderers to be apprehended, whipped, and passed to their own parishes. He therefore roundly informed his daughter that she must thenceforth consider her heart engaged, as well as her hand, for the match was fixed; and therefore she might suppose whatever discourse he had indulged her with, as having only been engaged in to promote conversation.

It now became necessary to speak out; and with the throbs and flutter of a new caught bird, Grace proceeded to plead with her parent for her natural liberty. She solemnly pledged herself never to marry without his consent; but in return, expected not to be forced into wedlock against her own inclination; and finally looking closely down into her wine-glass, as if detecting some almost imperceptible flaw in it, she informed him she had already received a declaration, from a member of the family he wished her to enter into, and then, with some difficulty, and a blush that came and went several times during the process, she managed to pronounce the name of Raby Tyrrel.

"If that be all," exclaimed the Magistrate, with one of his grim smiles, "we shall have no difficulty. I can guess your scruples; but I will help your inexperience to draw up a proper form of dismissal, or, how say you, Grace? Shall Nick Ferrers furnish you with a printed form of discharge, to fill up?"

"Oh! it is no jest!" murmured poor Grace; and, indeed, the mere word dismissal had drowned

her blue eyes in tears. "I am afraid,—my dear father, do forgive me; but—" and hastily running to him, and clasping her arms round his neck, she sobbed a few syllables into his ear. Whatever they were, a magical formula could not have had a more potent effect. He thrust his daughter from him, and backing his chair a couple of yards, sat gazing on her with a severe set look, worthy of the stern stoic he had chosen for his model. It made Grace shrink, and clasp her little hands so firmly to her eyes, that rings and spangles of pink and green, and gold colour, began dancing before them.

"Grace!" said that deep voice, which was never assumed but the words conveyed some infliction, "Ring for pen, ink, and paper. This childish fancy, and its object, must be discarded before I sleep."

"My dear—my dearest father!" cried the terrified girl, advancing and throwing herself on her knees at the feet of her obdurate parent. "Bid me—command me, do any thing but that—"

"NOTHING but that!" answered the voice, with a positive emphasis on the negative, that was

meant to put an end to the debate: "and let it be done before bed-time, if you value my nightly blessing."

"Then God help me!" exclaimed Grace, rising up and lifting her hands and her flashing eyes towards the ceiling; "for I must appeal from one father to another! Heaven heard my vow, and I dare not—I do not wish to break it; and I will not!" So saying, with flushed cheeks and forced composure, she went and seated herself on the sofa, with that air of dignity which results from a sense of unmerited harshness and injustice.

The Justice was thunderstruck. He knew not what "woman, when she loves, can dare;" and this avowed rebellion against his authority aimed a blow at his whole code of laws—civil, moral, and divine. But his temper was not hot: it was cold, and, like metal when cold, inflexible; accordingly he met his daughter's declaration with great calmness; nevertheless, he abated not one jot of his determination that the sentence he had pronounced should be enforced. Tea passed over silently and serenely; but it was the calm preceding a storm.

As soon as the meal was finished he left the drawing-room, and in about a quarter of an hour he required the presence of his daughter in the study.

This room was Grace's aversion. She never willingly set foot in it; for it contained the gloomy picture of the Judgment of Brutus, to which, with the natural partiality of a child, she was fain to attribute the extreme severity of her parent. It was, in itself, a painting sufficiently repulsive: the figures were of the size of life, and the artist had contrived to throw into the Roman's countenance an expression of rigid austerity, so unmitigated by any softer conflicting feeling, that the spectator could not help thinking that such a personage was fully as likely to excite rebellion and conspiracy, as to punish it. Moreover, in presence of this obnoxious picture, such numerous awards of fine, imprisonment, hard labour, and stripes, had been made, that to Grace's fancy, the chamber always seemed occupied by an atmosphere of sighs.

It is always acutely painful to a well-disposed heart to find itself directly arrayed against the will

of a parent; and as the daughter seated herself opposite her father, as it were taking up hostile positions preparatory to the attack and defence of adverse feelings, motives, and wishes, a pang smote her that her experience had never matched in bitterness. Something like a groan escaped her as she settled herself in her chair, and summoned all her heart, soul, and strength to aid her in resistance, for the first strange time, to the author of her being. The two minutes that elapsed before he spoke seemed a weary age. But at last came the toll of that curfew voice to command the extinction of the flame she cherished.

"Grace, from your cradle till this hour you have never disobeyed me. A long course of duty must not now be effaced by an act of deliberate opposition. The authority I derive from nature must be sustained. The blood that beats in your heart was derived from me, and the clothing of your hand is flesh of my flesh, and can it be said then that I have no right to dispose of one or control the affections of the other? No! by the death of your lamented mother I have rather a twofold claim to

direct you, and it is doubly incumbent upon me to exercise the power so delegated, and to enforce, if necessary, your complete submission. If the sovereignty of a king be a divine right, and I see no reason to impugn the doctrine, how sacred must be the origin of a parent's jurisdiction, where the subject is indebted to the supreme head, not merely for liberty and protection, but for life itself, and the means whereby life is sustained. Domestic government indeed is, or ought necessarily to be, a pure despotism, seeing that there is no intermediate estate between the parent and the child, the ruler and the ruled. His decrees, consequently, are arbitrary and absolute, exacting and requiring implicit acquiescence. Unlike the monarchical sway, it can in no case be conferred by election or popular suffrage, nor can it, without criminality, be abdicated and laid down. Ill, therefore, would it become me to concede my own will in any point, and especially a point of magnitude, thereby annulling, undermining and vitiating that paramount principle, which, for the sake of domestic polity, I am imperiously bound to uphold. The ancient

title of Dictator, attached to the first magistrate, who was considered as Pater Familias, expresses my own view of the case, and at this moment I have before me a memorable example of the inexorable rigour with which the Romans conceived it necessary to maintain such authority."

The last allusion was fatal to the courage and composure of poor Grace. She had never known her father to revoke a decision which he had backed by the example of Brutus; and the reference to the picture assured her at once that no terms of compromise would be listened to, but that she must either submit by an unconditional surrender, or prepare to maintain the independence of her heart, like the memorable defence of Zaragoza, by a protracted struggle of unexampled misery and pertinacity. She could not forbear a shudder as she looked at the set determined countenance of her father; and, in addition to her mental distress, she began to suffer under that physical depression and discomfort which peculiarly affect some individuals at the approach of a storm. As the Justice resumed his oration, every pause of his sonorous

voice was filled up with the muttering of distant thunder, a deepening gloom fell suddenly in the apartment, and as Grace cast a glance through the window which looked towards the Hall, she saw the landscape darkening under the black lowering clouds, and the crooked lightning darting angrily along the horizon. Even thus her own prospect in life was suddenly overcast and menaced with trouble and tempest, and she could willingly have answered the moans and sighs of the wind with her own.

"And now Grace," said the Magistrate, "having pointed out to you the line prescribed by duty, I hope a child of mine cannot require an appeal to her affection to induce her to the course of rectitude. I need not, I hope, remind her that the path pointed out to her by parental solicitude for her welfare, leads eminently to her own happiness and advantage. It will be sufficient to Grace Rivers that filial piety enjoins a cheerful and ready obedience to the will and wishes of the best of fathers."

Grace hid her face in her hands, and made no answer.

"Speak, I command you," said the Justice, in his sternest tone: "Give me your promise forthwith to receive Ringwood as your accepted lover, and in consideration of your prompt acquiescence I may be induced to forgive your breach of duty and due confidence in making a selection of your own without my sanction, privity, or concurrence."

"I acknowledge my fault," said Grace, sobbing, "but, indeed, I waited only for courage and opportunity to tell you all—"

"Enough," said the Magistrate, in a softened tone, not conceiving it possible that a rebellious thought could have survived his oration. "The past, Grace, is pardoned; and now prepare to meet your future husband on Wednesday, for in the interval I mean to visit Sir Mark, and settle preliminaries; and I feel assured that the formation of such a desirable match will add largely and universally to the general joy at the festival which is about to take place."

A startling crash of thunder, as if dashing in the roof of the house, seemed to ratify the sentence just pronounced. The father sat still as unmoved and imperturbable as usual, though the flash which belonged to the shock had shivered a poplar in sight of the window; but it made the terrified girl start to her feet with a smothered scream, as she saw the green tree upon which she had been gazing instantaneously stripped and whitened by the rending off of the bark.

"Let the disobedient dread the bolt," said the Justice, solemnly; "but you, Grace, have chosen the better part. There has been angry weather between ourselves, but it has only served to clear the moral atmosphere. Duty resumes its sway; affection shines out unobscured; and all is peace, harmony, and domestic serenity."

"Oh, no, no, no!" exclaimed Grace, in a piercing voice, "I do not,—I cannot—"

"You can, you must, and you shall," replied the Justice, resuming all his austerity of voice, and knitting his brows more rigidly than ever. "You

know my will. Obey it, or henceforth be no daughter of mine."

"Then Heaven pity me, for I am fatherless," said Grace, mournfully, and clasping her hands. "If you, sir, can recall affections that have once been given, it is a power beyond mine. Discard me as you may, my heart will never cease to love you; it will always turn to you with fond remembrance; and if with the same constancy, the same tenacity, it clings to its attachment elsewhere—"

"Not another syllable, I charge you," said the Justice, "unless you would provoke my curse. Know that to this desirable contract Sir Mark Tyrrell and myself have been pledged, and mutually bound in honour, for years past. Should it be now broken, it shall not be said on the other part that it was through want of due firmness and decision on mine."

Grace, however, inherited some portion of her father's inflexibility; and besides, her affections were now deeply engaged to Raby, and inspired her with that devoted spirit of enduring constancy

that belongs to a woman's love. Religion never made more martyrs or more heroical amongst men, than the tender passion has produced of the gentler sex. A gleam of triumph shone through Grace's tears, as she determined in her soul, at all hazards, and through every suffering, to remain true to her plighted faith, with the self-devotion so sweetly recorded of lovers in ancient song. Her features took an expression of resolve, and her limbs composed themselves in a less forlorn attitude, as, with a faltering voice, but unfaltering purpose, she breathed a vow never to bestow her hand unless her heart went with it.

"And take my solemn vow in exchange," said the obdurate parent, rising from his chair, and confronting his daughter, while he pronounced each word with deliberate emphasis—"Except as the wife elect of Ringwood Tyrrel, you shall have no more a home in my heart or in my house, so help me Heaven!"

A long and dreadful silence ensued, whilst the father and daughter, each as pale as marble, stood thus face to face, and looked at each other, mutually

astounded by the unnatural position to which they stood thus solemnly pledged. The lightning flashed fearfully around; the thunder rolled incessantly; the hail dashed furiously; and the wind had become a hurricane; but the terrors of the storm were lost upon the pair thus absorbed, each suffering the pangs of a bereavement little short of death. At last the father turned abruptly away, and began to pace up and down the apartment; while Grace threw herself into a chair, and, laying her head upon the table, gave free passage to her tears. In the meantime, in walking to and fro, the Justice, in occasionally glancing through the window, perceived a horseman galloping at full speed through the storm towards the house, but it was so dusk that he was unable to distinguish the livery of the Tyrrels till the groom dismounted at the gate. In some alarm at the apparent urgency of the mission at such a time, he hurried from the room to anticipate the tidings, leaving Grace so lost in grief as to be unconscious of his departure.

About ten minutes had elapsed, and she was still weeping, when a touch upon her shoulder

made her start up, and she beheld her father looking at her with an indescribable expression on his face, which she found it impossible to interpret.

"Grace," he said, after a long pause, and his voice had an unusual quiver in it, and the hand shook violently that still remained on her shoulder. "Grace, I have dreadful tidings to communicate—this match is at an end with Ringwood Tyrrel."

"Oh! my dear father, thanks, thanks," sobbed Grace, sinking at his feet, and clasping his hand, which she attempted to kiss, but he drew it away, and retreated a step backwards.

"It was the act of Heaven, and not mine," he said, with an awe-struck look, and a tone of deep humiliation; "God's will be done! I intended Ringwood for my son-in-law; but I stand rebuked. He is gone 'where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.'"

"Ringwood dead!" exclaimed Grace; "it is impossible!" and she fixed her gaze upon vacancy; for at such announcements the mind cannot immediately reconcile itself to the conversion of a familiar living image into an effigy of death.

"It is too true," said the Justice, shaking his head, while tears dropped from his black eye-lashes; "and God comfort my poor old friend. To lose his first-born son was a heavy calamity enough without blood and unnatural violence."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Grace, almost gasping with horror and amazement, and shudder-ing as she pronounced the name of St. Kitts.

"Worse—worse tenfold," said her father; "a wretch who must be called a brother!"

He proceeded no farther, for at the last word Grace uttered a piercing shriek, and fell, as if shot, upon the floor. Her cry alarmed all the household, and the servants rushed into the room before the distracted parent had presence of mind enough to call for their assistance. With the utmost difficulty the poor girl was restored to life, if it could be called living—for at each temporary recal, after uttering a few disjointed syllables, she relapsed again into insensibility. In this pitiable condition she was conveyed to her chamber, and placed in bed, where night found her in a raging fever, and delirious.

A favourite with the household, she was affectionately attended and nursed by the old housekeeper and another female domestic who had been attached to her from her infancy, and many a sincere tear was shed, and many a fervent prayer put up, for the sorrows and the recovery of the dear, good, and beautiful Grace Rivers.

The stern harsh nature of the Justice relented at the spectacle of his only and beloved child thus stretched upon a bed, possibly of death; and he gave way to his feelings with a violence equally unexampled and unexpected from such a source. In reality he doated upon his daughter, and nothing but his extravagant notions of parental right, with a firm conviction that he was securing her welfare, could have sustained him in the severe course he had recently pursued towards her. But his plan was now wrecked; he had no motive for harshness; and his words and manner indicated nothing but the intense anxiety and affliction of a fond father. He passed the whole night in his study receiving frequent reports of her state, or paying visits to her bedside; but

alas, only to be shocked by her incoherent ravings, which drove him down stairs again, to watch and pray in agony for the arrival of the physicians, who had been sent for by expresses.

It is worthy of serious reflection, as illustrating the uncertainty of human plans and the vanity of human wishes, that, at the very time when the Justice was so absolutely broaching his matrimonial scheme to his daughter, and even whilst he was asserting the infallibility of his own will, and presumptuously shaping the course of events—at that very hour was the bridegroom of his election struck dead; thus signally vindicating the supremacy of the Divine Will, in accordance with the adage which serves for a motto to the present chapter. Reflections akin to this forced themselves on the mind of the magistrate during his solitary watch, and with a chastened spirit he acknowledged the rebuke; but as too often happens, where the author of the infliction may not be murmured at, or arraigned, the reproach fell upon the instrument. The past conduct and character of the unfortunate Raby were reviewed

with the merciless malignity ascribed to a Venetian inquisitor; his acts were remorselessly scrutinised, and his motives wrested by uncharitable construction into infernal impulses. He was accused of aggravated fratricide, condemned unheard, branded, and put under ban,—the implacable demands of rigid justice resumed their sway with a more vindictive craving than had hitherto belonged to them, and in a very unchristian spirit the magistrate determined to exert himself on the track of the murderer, and, employing all his means and sagacity, to pursue him with the unrelenting purpose of the bloodhound.

In this resolve, the feelings of his daughter found no allowance. Love in his estimation was but as one of those slight epidemics, easily caught, and as easily cured by proper treatment; and indeed frequently got over without any treatment at all. As for the repugnance of Sir Mark to a criminal prosecution, an admirer of Brutus, with a monomania on the subject of justice, could not reasonably be expected to spare a son, who was not his own.

CHAPTER III.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a green-grass turf,
At his heels a stone.

HAMLET.

Weeping maiden, sorrow laden,
Why in brine such glances smother?
If your lover can't recover,
Will red eyes entice another?

FURNIVAL.

DEATH falls like a bomb-shell. Wherever it may strike, the explosion scatters destructive fragments on every side, inflicting wounds and anguish of various magnitude and degree. Thus, whilst desolation came upon the Hall and Hawksley, a portion of the same cruel affliction was carried to Squire Ned, by Dick the huntsman; and Bob,

the whip, galloped over to Hollington with similar intelligence.

> Like tidings to King Henry came
> Within as short a space,
> That Percy of Northumberland,
> Was slain in Chevy Chase.

And the difference of manner with which the tidings were received by the two kings in the old ballad, was paralleled in the two last instances. The Squire listened to the heavy news of Ringwood's fall, with the desponding reflection of the Scottish monarch, that death could not have stricken another of such account as he. "Shot like vermin!" he ejaculated, after a pause of stupor; and rushing off to the stable, he began saddling a horse with his own hands. In a few minutes he was mounted, and in another he was dashing along amidst thunder, lightning, and rain, with the desperate gallop of a Spectre Horseman, ever and anon repeating his first ejaculation, throughout his dreary ride, and, at each exclamation, burying the spur up to the rowels in the flanks of his steed.

The shock to the citizen's feelings, on the

contrary, took a selfish turn, and gave his alarm a singular, but characteristic, direction. With as much curiosity as concern, while the whipper-in stood dripping and shivering before him, Twigg required as circumstantial a narrative of the catastrophe as the man could give; the auditor occasionally turning up his eyes, flapping with his hands, and making a clucking sound with his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and when the melancholy tale was ended, he proceeded to give vent to his emotions.

"Very shocking, very shocking indeed! I'll pack 'em all off, stock and lock, there shan't be so much as a pocket-pistol about the Hive, as sure as my name's Twigg."

There is an old saying that extremes meet, and no adage can be more strikingly verified than this is in human life, by the frequent encounter of the serious and the ludicrous on the same occasion. There cannot be a more erroneous notion than that popular one, which appropriates to mirth and grief each its own peculiar stage, like the Parisian theatres, where one house is devoted to tragedy

and another to comedy; whereas the world is a vast stage, whereon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are not only acting at once, but sometimes by the same performer. Of this truth, one of the most remarkable characters in its drama must have been well aware, when he pronounced his memorable sentence, that "from the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step." Even thus closely lie the domains of laughter and tears, divided, not by an impassable frontier, as some suppose, but dubiously separated by a debateable land, leaving easy access to either territory, and, of course, subjecting the rival kingdoms to frequent incursions. Thus tears are seen at festivals, and smiles at funerals; nay laughter, in the writer's experience, has mingled with lamentation in the chamber of death. Nevertheless, even Shakspeare, the best judge of man, next to his Maker, and the best acquainted with the human heart, has been moused at by some of his owlish critics, for his abrupt transitions from the pathetic to the humorous, as if such were not the very warp and woof of our variegated fabric. These alternations of lights

and shadows are imperatively necessary to a faithful picture of life; but it is sometimes made a cause of reproach to the painter that he should be accessible at a tragical occurrence to any livelier associations, as if the same tearful eye that appreciates the sorrows of the inmates of a house of mourning, should see nothing but melancholy in the smirks of the two smug mutes at the door. But Death himself sometimes cuts a caper in mockery, and the very skull of man wears a grin, commemorative of the farcical passages in the serio-comic entertainment that is over. There is a class in the present day called, par excellence, exclusives, but the Passions do not belong to this caste, they meet, mingle, and shake hands. They are not bigoted sectarians and separatists, but congregate and communicate freely in one great temple—the human heart; so that life becomes from the mixture a sort of Irish wake, a medley of joy and sorrow, with some weeping, and some laughing, desolation and jollification, howling and singing, praying and drinking, loving and fighting, with the grave in the back-ground. Even the

same passion will sometimes transform itself so utterly, as to raise doubts of its identity; thus Grief, in passing merely from house to house, will change in manners and consume as much as if she had travelled from London and Paris, and thence to Petersburgh or Amsterdam. In one place, for example—pale, with dishevelled hair and neglected dress, she will sit as still as a statue, a very Niobe, in all but the trickling motion of her tears. In another, clad in fashionable sables, she will weep becomingly into white cambric, as gracefully affected as at her first perusal of Charlotte and Werter. In a third, cased in "abominable blacks," instead of spring silks, she mopes less like sorrow, than a fit of the sulks. Elsewhere you may find her violent, hysterical, and noisy, raining like St. Swithin, sobbing, snuffing up salts, and, at measured intervals, bursting into a loud exclamation, as if instead of crying for a husband, she was crying mackarel. Finally, you may meet her at Brighton for a change of scene, fat, fair, and forty, telling you, with the comely, cosy composure of a quakeress, that her heart is

broken, she is tired of life, and her address is 10, Brunswick Terrace.

The judicious reader, therefore, will not be surprised to find the grief at Hawksley, and the grief at Hollington not so exactly alike as two twin sisters, whose dresses, moreover, have been out of the same piece, and made up in the same fashion.

As soon as Twigg had dismissed the whipper-in, —and his agitation did not make him forget doing what is genteel, for he considerately dipped his hand into his pocket, and gave Bob a half-crown, as if he had brought him a hare—he fell into soliloquy. Since the memorable fête at the Hive, the Twigg family had never attempted another; and for some time past, their speculations had been very busy with the festival at the Hall, and particularly whether it would turn out any better than their own. The downfall of the domestic jubilee consequently occupied a prominent place in the citizen's meditations.

"Good lord! good lord!" he said, "here's a domestic family blow! It's come down what I call

thick and threefold. Poor, dear, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, how I feel for him; such a dreadful misfortune for a man of his property! Eldest son and heir—tents, tables, illuminations, twenty-one guns, and every thing—shocking—shocking—shocking—and only just coming of age. We may well say what is life—all feasting to-day, and all fasting to-morrow—all dancing and jigging, and singing and bands playing, and flag-flying, and bells ringing, and huzzaing one minute, and the next moment quite another sort of thing—yes, yes, I can enter into a father's feelings. Well, I never did like fire-arms, but my mind's made up. It might be my own case before I could say Jack Robinson—and such a fine well-grown young man too—to be born to such property, and never can come into it. Poor 'Tilda! she'll go half crazy. Toasts—sentiments—speechifying, and a whole roasted bullock—cut off in his prime as you may say—and just when people were going to wish him many returns of the day—poor boy—but such is man—it's quite a warning—who knows—here I am—and to-morrow here I ain't—I'll certainly

make a will, and dispose of my property—Oh dear, dear! Sir Mark must make a sad alteration in his; one son dead, and the other absconded. Well, thank God, T. junior, has no brother to shoot him through and through like a mad dog. It's a very very bad business—worse than a regular smash says you, with shutters up, execution in the house and everything."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, who had entered the room during the last sentence of his soliloquy, "what frightful fancies is running in your head?"

"I wish they were fancies, Ma'am," answered Twigg, with a voice unusually solemn; "but fancy can't shoot a young man through the body—and fancy can't put off all the to-do at the Hall—and fancy didn't come here on a tearing horse, through thunder and lightning—and fancy isn't Bob the whipper-in"—he continued, conceiving this discourse upon fancy equal to what is called breaking the news—"and it wasn't fancy that told me, that Raby Tyrrel had taken up his gun like Cain, and shot his own brother."

"His own brother!—what Ringwood!" shrieked out Mrs. Twigg, while her husband precipitately rushed for a chair for her to swoon in; but, contrary to his expectations, she showed no tendency to insensibility: probably, because she had already fainted so much at the flashes and claps of the storm that she was out of fits. After a minute of consideration, she turned hastily round and rushed out of the room, and a sound followed like the rumble of a parish engine descending the church steps, except that the noise went up the stairs instead of coming down—then came a loud scream from over-head, with a bustle of feet, answered by the violent continuous ringing of a bell in the lower story, and a prolonged clatter of many persons rushing up from below. Following the direction of the human current, the father hurried upwards to his daughter's apartment, where he found her in strong fits, with the mother slapping one hand, and her milliner crooking the little finger of the other.

It is or was the custom of the modern Romans to parade their dead relations through the streets;

and Dr. Trusler mentions seeing a portly defunct thus carried in state, in his holiday suit, with one hand holding a bouncing nosegay, and the other stuck gracefully in his side. As pale as death, and tricked out according to the last new fashion from Paris, which she had been trying on preparatory to the fête at the Hall, Miss Twigg might have been taken for a body undergoing its adornment for a similar ceremonial. A pink satin had, as if in studious contrast to her complexion, made her look "very dead indeed," while a silk dress, of a pattern not at that time old-fashioned, on a white ground, displayed large bunches of roses, lilies, and some nondescript blossoms, looking as if the hand of regret had strewed her with flowers. But she soon literally kicked down this comparison, by her fit assuming that convulsive character vulgarly distinguished as kicking hysterics; and leaving the little finger, the milliner was fain to snatch off the becoming hat, and to prevent two remarkably active feet from entangling themselves in the surrounding flounces.

"Screech, my love, it will relieve you," said

the anxious mother, raising her daughter as she spoke into a favourable position for the exertion of her voice; and accordingly Matilda gave a scream that convinced the whole household, if not the whole neighbourhood, that she was alive; at the same time striking out with both arms and legs as if really swimming in what Hamlet calls "a sea of troubles."

"Hold her arms," exclaimed the father, advancing for the purpose; "why the devil don't you lay her on the bed?"

"The worst place in the world," cried the milliner, interposing in dread of the proposed rumpling of the new dress. "But gentlemen know nothing of these things," she added, with a significant look at Mrs. Twigg, which said "turn him out" as plainly as if it had come from the one-shilling-gallery of a playhouse.

"Mr. T—," said the lady, taking the hint, "you don't know what insensibility is. Leave her to us, poor dear! and I'll answer for her coming-to directly you are out of the room."

"As much as to say, ma'am," retorted Twigg, angrily, "that it's all 'sham Abraham,' and as

such can recover as convenience dictates. But as I am a little solicitous, an early opportunity will oblige; not but what I think, at bringing-to a daughter, a father might help as well as a mother;" and by way of proving his assertion, as he stalked out of the apartment, he closed the door with a slam that might have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

No sooner was he gone than, as Mrs. Twigg had predicted, the patient actually unclosed her eyes, and her feelings regained a state of composure as suddenly and completely as when a whaler is dashed to pieces, and lulls the troubled surface of the waters with her whole cargo of oil.

And now, lest it be supposed that a pen—none of the hard short-nibbed sort, but one of the softest ever shaped—could make itself merry with disappointed affection or real distress, it must be unwillingly written to the discredit of the sex, that the young lady's grief was no greater than a fresh admirer could dissipate.

Since the fête champêtre at the Hive, the son of a baronet had been losing ground to the son of a lord, and Miss Twigg had determined to set her

cap, and the new pink hat to boot, at the honourable Mr. Danvers, some of whose looking on she had taken to herself. The ambition of the mother encouraged this second flirtation; but something was due to decorum on the interment of the first. Hence this dramatic burst of sorrow; after which, if the heart of Matilda sang any dirge at all over the departed Ringwood, it was to the tune of that most prudential of ditties,

'Tis well to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new.

CHAPTER IV.

'Tis water here, 'tis water there,
'Tis water, water, every where.
THE ANCIENT MARINER.

Rumour is a pipe
Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures;
And of so easy and so plain a stop,
That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
The still discordant wavering multitude,
Can play upon it.
KING HENRY IV. PART II.

THROUGHOUT the day succeeding the storm, the rain poured as at the old deluge, and the sun rose the next morning on an unusual scene. Where his beams had before glittered but on dew-drops, they now glistened over a wide expanse of water; where formerly a winding sluggish mist betrayed the course of the latent brook, the light

now danced on a broad brawling river; trees that used to cast long horizontal shadows across the meadows, now showed inverted reflections, tending downwards from their feet; what used to be hills were now become islands, swarming with horses, cattle, deer, sheep, pigs, and even hares and rabbits, while the lapwing screamed piteously over a watery waste that had once been a heath. Such a flood had not occurred in the county within the memory of man. Rills had swelled to rivulets, brooks to rivers, and the rivers themselves were become roaring, raging torrents. Bridges were carried away, hay and corn stacks floated off, and uprooted trees were whirled along with the current. Even the "gentle streamlet," beside which Raby and Grace had plighted their troth, was now a rapid, in parts white with foam, and elsewhere as dark and troubled as the future course of the love it helped to commemorate. The little bridge had been swept away, and a venerable weeping willow, a sort of vegetable King Lear, showed plainly that its hoary head had been exposed to "the pelting of the pitiless

storm," and half uprooted by the sapping of the banks, seemed meditating to cast itself into the turbid waters.

Considerable damage was suffered in the hamlet, —cellars were turned into cold baths, and floors and kitchens were well washed without much advantage in point of cleanliness; whilst the villagers stepped from their houses, like the Venetians, into boats. Animals of various kinds had been drowned, and two or three unfortunates of human kind were reported to be missing.

Evil tidings are swift of passage. They seem to copy the flight of eagles, vultures, kites, and all those creatures equally swift and cruel, which bring sharp beaks and talons wherewith to tear and to torture the vitals. In an incredible short space of time, in spite of interrupted communication, the destruction of bridges, and the stoppage of mails, the news of the violent death of Ringwood Tyrrel was spread throughout the county. It flew from house to house, and from mouth to mouth, and with the ravages of the storm and the flood,—the rending of oaks,—the blasting of cattle, and the firing

of stacks, the fearful bolt that had fallen upon Tylney Hall became a topic of popular conversation.

Travellers, by old repute, are liars, and a story in the course of its journeyings invariably becomes, at each succeeding stage, rather less addicted to the truth. Thus, in the progress of the melancholy narrative from place to place, it acquired many considerable and circumstantial additions, which passed not the less currently that they were all forgeries. For instance, Raby was reported not only to have murdered his brother, but to have attempted the life of his father by poison, the deadly ingredient even being particularised by name; howbeit, one version said laurel-water, another arsenic, and a third corrosive sublimate. In another quarter it was as confidently affirmed that Sir Mark had destroyed himself, though the accounts still differed whether by laudanum, a pistol or a rope; while, in the eastern part of the county, he had as certainly gone raving mad, and been coerced into a straight waistcoat. In short, the most extravagant rumours prevailed, but the main

facts being based, alas! upon immutable truth, were universally the same; and wherever the dreadful deed was discussed, speculation became busy with chances, and characters, and motives, and the ultimate decision, as the Creole had predicted, was unfavourable to his fugitive kinsman. The murder of Sir John Dinely, by a brother covetous of his estates, was frequently quoted, and the cutting off of Ringwood just at the point of his coming of age, was particularly insisted on to countenance the most dark and dreadful conjectures. Probably, such is the intense selfishness of some natures, the prevention of the promised festival had occasional weight in these decisions. Tears were shed that, perhaps, belonged more to disappointment than pity, as useless finery was consigned to its ancient receptacles; and a few coarse and brutal individuals were even heard openly to execrate the unfortunate fratricide for killing his brother on the wrong side of the feast. The vulgar appetite for the terrible and the marvellous, and a consequent tendency to heap horror on horrors, had had some share in these exaggera-

tions and insinuations, a portion of which moreover were to be traced to the notorious suspicions of the under-keepers at the Hall, who had been confirmed in their surmises by the supernatural signs and omens which a superstitious fancy had supposed to accompany the removal of the corpse. The lightning was declared to have fluttered and hovered about the dead body in an extraordinary manner; and in supreme corroboration was the fact, (a curious coincidence, though quite a natural occurrence,) that the fatal weapon had been struck from the hand of the assistant who carried it, and was found the next morning with its bright barrels changed by the electric fluid into all the colours of the rainbow.

Amongst all these harsh inquisitors no one thought of, or sympathised with, the deplorable condition of the distracted fugitive, who had rushed, in a state of mind difficult to conceive, into the wild forest, to encounter the united assaults of anguish, despair, remorse, and terror, in the midst of darkness, storm, and desolation. Startled by the woman's wild exclamations, he had taken to flight,

pursued by every infernal fiend that can haunt the mind of man, and with all his speed ran to and fro, he knew not whither, in the panting bewilderment of the hunted hare, as described by Shakspeare:

> Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
> Turn and return, indenting with the way;
> Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
> Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay.
> For misery is trodden on by many;
> And being low, never relieved by any.

Although but accidentally the agent of his brother's death, the acute pangs of self-reproach were not spared to him, as his conscience suggested that a deviation from his own creed, relative to spilling even the blood of brutes, had entailed on him so signal a judgment. Thus he considered himself, at least indirectly, a murderer, equally frowned upon by earth and heaven; and, under the influence of this harrowing reflection, by which his reason was almost unsettled, he felt, thought, and acted, according to the impulses of the mere assassin. Indeed, upon no other principle would it be possible to account for a course of proceeding so like that of conscious guilt.

The myrmidons of the law, moreover, according to the Justice's resolution, had been despatched in all directions in pursuit of the prejudged criminal, extending and confirming the popular prejudice wherever they went, so that if the unhappy fugitive ventured amongst men, he must have heard every voice raised against him in execration, coupled with hopes of his speedy apprehension,—many a wish for his execution, and even some hardy anticipations of his last dying speech and confession.

Such was the state of popular feeling, when a jury was summoned to pronounce on the manner in which Ringwood Tyrrel had come by his death; it may very easily be supposed, that the verdict the public opinion forestalled, was an unfavourable one; what chance there was to the contrary, may be inferred from part of a conversation that took place between two pedestrians, as they walked side by side along the road from Hollington towards the Hall. One of the parties will be recognised as a personage already introduced to the reader, the other was a gentlemanly,

middle-aged person, of the military profession, to judge from his mustachios, black stock, and blue surtout of a soldierly cut: moreover, his countenance appeared toil-worn and weather-beaten, and deeply embrowned by hard service in foreign climates.

"I wonder where he will be hung," said the former, "on the old gallows at Midgeley Common, or at the place where the deed was done on?"

"He is not caught yet," remarked the latter, "much less condemned even by a coroner's jury."

"No, but Gregory's at his heels," answered the other, "with the posse commitus, as the saying is. He may cheat the marble, but he won't cheat the wood. As for the inquest, it will be wilful murder, and nothing else, take my word for it; that's a slab, as I say when a thing is downright flat and fixed upon."

"I hope it may be," said the soldier, "for I hate killing in cold blood. But how are you so sure, friend?"

"Sure, say you!" exclaimed Master Tablet, for

it was no other than that worthy master mason, "I shouldn't mind cutting it in, every letter on it. To one as looks such a gentleman I don't mind blabbing a bit; but, Sir, you must be as mum as a death's head."

"I am used to secrets," said the stranger, with a subdued smile.

"Why then, Sir," proceeded Tablet, "Master Gregory, our head constable, Sir, don't like trouble, and always saves as much on it as he can; so he just looks in at the Rabbits last night, and serves summonses on the whist club, nine on us at a haul, and as we couldn't get up no rubber, a foreman was chose, and we went through the business preliminy. Every man was unanimous, Sir, and that's how I know the verdict aforehand."

"And a very proper decision," said the stranger; "indeed no other could be honestly formed. But the number, friend, at your rehearsal, was short of the legal complement."

"Oh never fear, Sir," answered the mason; "I can turn Trott and Jenkins round my finger, and as for Bundy——"

"How! is *he* on it?" exclaimed the stranger, with a tone of surprise.

"To be sure he is," said Tablet, "as any one else might have been, by standing tip. He got Greggy to summon him on purpose, and I warrant you, if we give a certain person to Jack Ketch, he won't be long giving him to Satan, for he's a deal more fond of sending folks to Hell than to Heaven."

"If there be one place or the other," said the stranger, as if speaking to himself. "And Sir Mark Tyrrel, friend, how does he bear this calamity?"

"As I could bear a ton of Scotch granite," said the mason; "has never held up since. David and Absalom, sir, David and Absalom. They say he don't neither eat, drink, nor sleep, and walks up and down his room day and night. But it's walking on his last legs; he's a dead man, Sir; I'm as sure on it as if I saw his name up between two flying nobodys, as the ignoramuses call my cherubims."

"And the estates?" asked the inquisitive stranger, "what will become of them?"

"They will go to the nevy, or rather the nevy will come to them," answered Tablet, with a smile at his own wit. "I was at the Rabbits the night he come from abroad, with his father that's dead; poor gentleman, it was touch and go with him; no sooner on English ground, than under it. I resurgam'd him myself. Did you know him, Sir?" continued the mason, observing some signs of agitation in his companion.

"Colonel Tyrrel was my old companion abroad," answered the other, instantly mastering his emotion, "and I should be glad to hear what character is borne by his son."

"More liked than loved," said the mason with a significant nod. "The devil's own temper, Hanway says, when he was a younker; and no wonder. Folks do say his mother gave the father his memento mori, and Mrs. Hanway saw the scar in his side when he was laid out."

"Aye, there is never a lie hatched, but some breast will be found to brood it," answered the stranger sharply; "and Mrs. Hanway seems one of those motherly hens."

"To be sure, folks will detract," said the mason. "I remember when I put up Bedlamite's obelisk—but we'll let that rest in peace. It's a comfort there *is* an heir to the Hall of the name of Tyrrel, to prevent every thing going out of the family, like *sic transit*."

"It *is* a comfort," said the stranger, "and I hope it will be appreciated."

"That's what I think myself," said the mason, eagerly; "instead of its going to them Twiggs, though I say it as shouldn't say it, for they give me the order for the two stone bee-hives, instead of the old eagles. But there's no real gentility about 'em; they boggle with a sculptor about a marble chimbley-piece, as if he was only a dealer in Flanders bricks. To my mind that ain't aristocracy. I'm told Mr. Twigg never crossed a horse, and then what would become of our hunt? I've erected as good requiescats over horses as christians; and if Mr. Walter did come a little of the wrong side of the blanket, as folks say, he's likely to be on the right side of the sheet, when it comes to debtor and creditor."

"You do honour to your profession," said the stranger, suddenly halting and extending his hand to the mason, who gripped it as if he had been a freemason. "It is too commonly supposed, that your province is only to exalt the virtues of the dead, but I find I have met with a man of more liberal views, who also does justice to the character of the living. The son of Colonel Tyrrel could not be otherwise than generous. When a Twigg dies, a diminutive tablet will express economy, the greatest and the smallest of his attributes; but at the departure of Walter Tyrrel, you will have to sculpture the cardinal virtues as large as life, and every good quality for which you can find a symbol."

"That's my own idea," said the sculptor; "if it ever please God to give me such an order, I'd put Faith, Hope, and Charity at top, and the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock at the bottom; that's what I call allegory. To my mind, allegory is putting one thing to stand for another that isn't it —like a member standing for a county. Talking of elections, the last contest killed Sir Theophilus

Bowles: the crying Cupid I put on his monument, used always to be called my plumper."

"There is another election to-day, between guilt and innocence," said the stranger, "and I hope the cause of public justice will triumph. Should it be in peril, friend, I can help you to a secret, in return for your own, that will do no discredit to your sagacity. But remember we are upon honour."

"As true as headstone to footstone," answered the mason, "and as I hope to be saved by I. H. S."

"If it be asked, then," said the stranger, "what motive beyond interest could induce one brother to make away with the other, answer, without hesitation, Miss Rivers—call her own father in proof of it."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the mason, lifting up his hands and eyes like one of his own stone effigies. "It was always whispered, that the young Squire and Miss Twigg had a leaning to each other, like two palm branches over an urn."

"That is very possible," rejoined the stranger,

"but young heads and old heads form opposite plans. The Baronet and the Justice had made a match between the heir and the heiress, but the younger brother had one eye on the lady, and the other on the estates, and truly these noble chestnuts, and that park and the Hall yonder, are worth wishing for, without Hawksley to boot. What a rabble there is about the gates!"

"It's to hear our verdict," said the mason pompously. "Yonder is Bundy talking and swinging his arms; and look at his coat pocket! as many as there are on 'em the mob won't go without a track apiece."

"Then I shall sit down in the shade of these trees," said the stranger; "I may never be in this part of the country again, and I should like to know the result."

"I wish your honour good morning," said Tablet, hastily; "there's the Justice's carriage at the door, and his worship don't like waiting."

And away the mason bustled, and was soon seen elbowing a passage through the crowd at the entrance.

"What a world of fools we live in," said the stranger, with a contemptuous curl of the lip as the juryman disappeared; "and yet the arrantest of them may be a judge of life or death; for one that tampers with blood illegally there are a dozen to spill it by form of law. There would be comfort in that for the scrupulous; but conscience is like the musquito, it ceases to sting when you have had a seasoning. Ringwood is dead, and Raby has turned Maroon: the wind blows fair for Walter Tyrrel, and any other of the name may walk the plank."

So saying, Marguerite, for it was her in disguise, settled herself in a reclining attitude against the tree, and with considerable composure awaited the drawing of this part of the scheme in the lottery of life.

CHAPTER V.

Is our whole dissembly appeared?

DOGBERRY.

"Murder, gentlemen, is where a man is murderously killed. The killer in such a case is a murderer. Now, murder by poison is as much murder as murder with a sword or a gun: it is the murdering that constitutes murder in the eye of the law. You will bear in mind that murder is one thing and manslaughter is another: therefore if it is not manslaughter it must be murder; and if it is not murder it must be manslaughter. Self-murder has nothing to do with this case, one man cannot commit felo de se on another, that is clearly my view. Gentlemen, I think you can have no difficulty; murder, I say, is murder. The murder of a brother is called fratricide; but it is not fratricide if a man murders his mother. You will make up your minds. You know what murder is, and I need not tell you what it is not. I repeat, murder is murder, you can retire upon it if you like."

FROM THE STERLING CHRONICLE.

THE coroner's inquest, involving an inquiry into the cause of any sudden termination of human life, is justly considered as one of our most important and valuable institutions, and accordingly its

functions are commonly delegated to the most obtuse and ignorant members of the community. The rich and the intelligent have influence or tact enough to elude its duties, so that the inquisition generally devolves on some dozen of logger-headed individuals, who serve habitually as jurymen for the parish in which they may happen to reside. They follow as implicitly as a flock of sheep the lead of their foreman, whose opinion goes in the wake of the coroner's, like a boat in tow of a ship. The latter personage himself is sometimes little better than a Dogberry, furnished with a few technical terms and legal distinctions which enable him to direct the Random Records of Visitations of God, Found Drowned, Wilful Murder, and Felo de se. Whether the official functionary of * * * * * belonged to this class will be seen by the evidence.

The preparations for the inquest had been made in the library, a room of ample dimensions, and able to accommodate a much greater number of persons than it contained. A vacant library chair awaited the occupation of the coroner; at the head of a long table, on its right, sat Mr. Richard

Tablet, the foreman, and on either side the rest of the jurors, comprising Messrs. Hands, Benson, and Walden, and five other members of the whist club, with serious countenances, all decidedly conscious of the temporary importance with which their office invested them, and as resolutely silent as if they had for once been engaged in a rubber at longs. The lowest on the left, but a head taller than any of the others in stature, the Ranter rolled about in his chair, his shaggy eyebrows working restlessly up and down, with the more activity, apparently, because his tongue was under restraint, and his hand groped impatiently, from time to time, in the pocket of his coat.

The arm-chair at the bottom of the table was reserved for the coroner's clerk.

As far aloof as the diameter of the room permitted, Mr. Justice Rivers had chosen his place, as motionless, and passionless, and as inexorable as Rhadamanthus himself—the final judge of eternal bale or bliss. Parallel with the magistrate sate Doctor Bellamy, bowing to any one whose eye he was so fortunate as to catch; whilst

St. Kitts occupied a recess, and, with his arms folded, and his back half turned towards the company, gazed intently through a window which looked towards the avenue. Old Mat. the gamekeeper, with his assistants, formed a group apart, one of the latter, holding the fatal double-barrelled gun, and the other male domestics of the Hall, and a few of the tenantry they had admitted by favour, completed the presence.

There was no conversation, unless a brief occasional whisper might be called so; and this prevailing silence in the chamber made a sound, that proceeded from the story above, the more remarkable. It was the incessant tread of a heavy foot, not monotonously, but sometimes slow, sometimes quick; occasionally it stopped, but soon resumed its course to and fro, and generally with an emphatic stamp. It was universally understood that this sound was attributable to the distempered pacing of Sir Mark up and down his apartment; and no effort of human eloquence could have had so forcible an effect upon the listeners, as the unceasing tramp—tramp—tramp, overhead. It

painted more terribly than any combination of words could have done, the state of the sufferer's mind. The modern tread-mill seems a physical type of that condition of mental torture, where the compelled thought strives vainly to overcome one perpetually revolving misery, without respite, and without progress.

"Dreadful, ain't it?" remarked Mr. Walden, in a whisper, to his neighbour, who only replied by an assenting nod.

"I wish Stubbs would come!" said Mr. Hands, under his breath, to Mr. Benson, who, in answer, pulled out his old-fashioned watch.

The huntsman looked towards the ceiling, and made a gesture, which old Mat. acknowledged by a shake of his grey head; the under-keepers, dejected and downcast, seemed transformed into convicted poachers, and some one drew a long, heavy, audible sigh, that interpreted the general feeling.

At this moment the melancholy sound of the foot-fall was lost in the noise of a scuffle, and the clamour of several tongues, above which the

stentorian voice of Master Heath, or, as he was commonly called, Bully Heath, the principal butcher of the village, was distinctly recognised.

"I've as good a right," he shouted, "as Dick Tablet, or any of the pack. I'm as marciful as any on 'em—and I'll stick my knife in his tripes as says otherwise!"

"You're no sich thing," answered a voice, equally familiar. "You're cruel by law, and so is surgeons."

Here the tumult increased, gradually progressing up stairs to the door of the library, where, at length, the bull-head of the butcher announced him, and then his sky-blue body was seen vehemently struggling for entrance, with the arms of Gregory the constable clinging round its waist. By help of a clutch of the door-post on either side, the brawny bully contrived to haul his carcass within the room, still bellowing like a bull in favour of his humanity, and promising all the cuts and thrusts of the slaughter-house to those who impugned it. In this hopeless case, Gregory left his hold, and began to rub his shins, which had

suffered severely from the kicking of the iron-shod high-lows of his antagonist.

"If it please your worship," said the constable, appealing to the Justice, "he wants to sit on the dead body, though he's a carcass-butcher by trade, and cannot sit upon any thing. That's crowner's quest law, all the world over."

At the words "your worship," Bully Heath glanced towards the personage addressed, and in an instant he looked as sheepish as one of his own lambs. "An't please your worship," he cried, "I only said I'd as much marcy as any on 'em; and so I have. If I was for to be cut up to-morrow, my heart would be found in the right place—but it shall be just as your worship pleases."

A significant point of the finger was the only answer from the magistrate. Custom, it is said, reconciles us to all things, and Master Heath enjoyed the custom of Hawksley; he accordingly departed without a bleat, and, as he quietly made his exit, another personage entered, so like the bully in face and person, that it seemed as if the butcher in blue had only been exchanged for a

butcher in black. The face of the new comer was quite as red and jovial as the bully's, his forehead as round and shining, his eyes as piggishly small, his nose as snubbish and clubbish, his mouth as like a slash in a beef steak, with a chin as if he had played for it, and got a double. His body was equally burly with his prototype's, and his well-fatted calf was cased, like the other's, in a glossy top-boot that aimed at taking the shine out of everything.

Such was the coroner for ———shire, and attorney withal, for he was placed on the Rolls before the present high duty on indentures, which makes it a matter of more difficulty for an errand-boy to succeed his employer, and stand in the shoes he formerly blacked. His promotion, however obtained, had been far from slow, and the rapidity of his rise seemed to have influenced his character. He bounced into the room, bobbed a hurried bow at the Justice, threw himself into the appointed chair, and began dabbling the bill of a pen in the inkstand, with the eagerness of a duck's in a gutter. Whatever portion of time may be a

jiffy, in half its usual space he had rubbed his bald head, blown his nose, and put on his spectacles, and then, at his best pace, began on a dozen topics at once, as if talking, not walking, a match against the celebrated Mr. Gurney. As far as the shortest of short-hand could collect, it ran thus:—

"Strange weather, gentlemen,—devilish dirty though! Dick, count the jury. Famous year for birds, they say,—shot seventeen brace myself. Foreman—eh,—Master Tablet? Sharp work, your worship, for one day: two visitations, a found drowned, and an accidental;—posting's unconscionably high,—Mr. Justice, you'll be at the Blue dinner?"

"I rather think not," said the Justice, in a dry tone.

"Sorry for it," resumed the inquisitor. "Capital dinners at the Eagle—very good house—wines excellent,—gentlemen, I needn't lay down—we've met before. Mr. Bundy, have patience—slow and sure. A very well proportioned room indeed,—very. Poor Sir Mark!—witnesses all in attend-

ance Dick? (the clerk nodded.) It's a melancholy event,—hadn't we better open a window? Such a promising young man!—If you please we'll view—where's the body?—Gregory, show the way—" and jumping up from his chair, as if to pick up a child, or save the post, or catch a wasp, the coroner scuttled along the room, and trundled down stairs with his twelve satellites in his train. The domestics and the tenantry, with the common wish of seeing and hearing all they could, joined the procession, and the Justice and the Creole were left to themselves.

Guided by the obsequious Gregory, the coroner and jury soon found themselves in the drawing-room, where the dead body, supported on tressels, awaited their inspection. As they eagerly approached the temporary bier, Squire Ned, who had constituted himself custos of the corpse, rose up, and retired into the adjoining room, as if his feelings shunned the contact of that vulgar curiosity, which too obviously attracted the jury towards the blood-stained remains of Ringwood Tyrrel. The coroner, to whom such sights were

familiar, after a momentary glance, turned away to a window, and found his view in a prospect of the park. In the depraved language of a depraved appetite, he had seen spectacles more worth looking at.

"Hic jacet," said the foreman solemnly, "what a melancholy memento of mortality; he must measure six feet."

"Aye, more nor that," said Mr. Benson, scanning the length with the critical eye of a carpenter, and in a moment his pocket-rule was travelling along the body, and the product was an inch and a half above the two yards.

"What matters feet and inches of flesh," exclaimed the loud, harsh voice of the Ranter, "all clay—potter's clay—pipe clay—and clay as makes bricks.—I'll measure his soul for you, length and breadth,—what's his body—all flesh is nothing but grass, and here is his'n, cut down, and fit to carry. But where's his soul? his immortal soul, is it gone to glory? or soused head foremost into burning brimstone?—O, my brethren, think in time of

hell,—none of your November bonfires, but flames everlasting, without end—where the more you are broiled, the more you ain't done."

Here he was stopped by the coroner, with his usual hurry.

"Amen—amen,—better another time. Well gentlemen—what a beautiful room this is! A very fine corpse, eh!—poor young man—who carries snuff? Dr. Bellamy, you've examined the body?"

"I have had that pleasure," replied old Formality, with an instinctive bow to the corpse, which, during its life, had once done him the honour to become his patient.

"Then, gentlemen," said the coroner, "all we have to do—"

"Not till I have lifted up my voice," said the Ranter, "twenty coroners shan't prevent a word in season; no, nor twenty fiery dragons,—what's the use of death, if it ain't to be improved on? And him as lies here was a scoffer and scorner,—yes, many's the time he has mocked at me, and

threatened to set his heathenish hounds at my heels, but where is he now himself—why, hunted by a tantivy of devils."

A general cry of "shame, shame," arose from the auditors at this brutal sentence, whilst Dick the huntsman walked up to the Ranter, and threatened him, with a bitter smile.

"My best thanks, Master Bundy, for putting me up to what young master would have done; his wish was as good as a bidding at any time, and if you show yourself again at the meet I'll lay 'em on."

"And for my part," said old Mat, "as soon as the quest's over,—I can't preachify, but I can fight a bit, and never did long so to crack a jaw-bone as yours. Shame on ye,—did you ever see a soul go to where you say, with a smiling face like that?" and he pointed to the placid features of the corpse. "The man that hits another when he's down, arn't half a man; but the man as belies the dead, as can't answer him, he arn't half a quarter o' one;" and with an indignant swing, he turned his broad back on the slanderer.

A general murmur of approbation, assented to the gamekeeper's homely sentiment, while his example was followed by the rest of the dependants, and not a few of the tenants, so that in a moment the Ranter found himself in an enviable situation for a man of a pugnacious disposition, with a score of challenges to select from, and boxing, wrestling, or cudgelling, at his option. But he was not a man of weak nerves: to the unblushing effrontery of his class, he united physical courage and hardihood, and alike regardless of time, place, and person, he stood as unmoved by the dozen fists that were shaken in his face, as unabashed by the general expression of disgust. He lifted up his own huge arms in the position of a letter Y, as if to exhibit his muscular proportions, and was beginning with "Bellow away, you bulls of Bashan,—long horns, and short horns," when the coroner interfered.

"Come, come Mr. Bundy, time's precious."

"And so's eternity," shouted the Ranter, while a foam gathered on his lips, and showed that his zeal was beginning to work and froth like new beer.

"I say I've to sit on more bodies, and I can't trifle," said the coroner, raising his voice.

"And I says eternity first," said the pertinacious Ranter, "what's sitting on bodies, to sitting on souls? what can you say to that?"

"That souls will keep, and the bodies won't," answered the coroner. "Gentlemen, you've all viewed?—seen all you can see—follow me—" and, like an old Young Rapid he trotted off, followed by his company, the Ranter contriving to be the last that left the room.

The magistrate, who had been left with the Creole in the interim, had availed himself of the opportunity to address certain inquiries to his companion.

"At the return of these wiseacres," he said, "you will be troubled, sir, with a hundred questions, as much tending to the purpose as to the discovery of the longitude. Allow me, therefore, in the meantime, to put a few of my own, for the sake of public justice as well as my personal satisfaction."

The Creole bowed, and the Justice proceeded.

"Allow me to ask then, sir, upon what terms were the two brothers at the time of the catastrophe?"

"I believe, sir," answered the Creole, with some hesitation, "they were upon the usual terms."

"The nature of which," said the magistrate, "was no secret to any person of common penetration. Of widely dissimilar habits, and consequently of opposite feelings and sentiments, they must have been subject to frequent disagreements if not occasional rancour and enmity. May I ask, sir, the date of their last quarrel?"

"There was some difference," answered St. Kitts, "or rather a mere momentary heat, springing out of a most trivial cause that occurred, if I recollect rightly, on the very morning of that day which we have so much reason to deplore."

"So, sir," remarked the Justice, his voice gradually assuming its severity, "there was ill-blood in the case; and Raby, whose ignorance and dislike of the sports of the field were sufficiently notorious, who was never known before to fire a gun, or to desire to fire one,—who professed,

I must say hypocritically, a repugnance to kill even a partridge—can you possibly assign, sir, any motive for his sudden assumption of the character of a sportsman?"

"None whatever, sir," answered the Creole; "but it is difficult to scrutinise human motives. We all have our moments of eccentricity."

"And some of us our moments of malignity," said the Justice, as if invested with his imaginary black cap. "It is then your opinion, sir, that to the violent quarrel that took place on the morning of the mur——"

The magistrate was about to add another syllable sufficiently indicative of a foregone conclusion, when the door opened, and the coroner led in his squad of inquisitors, talking all the way to save time.

"Well, gentlemen, you've seen the body,—warm weather, Mr. Justice, won't keep long,—Mr. Bundy, don't talk,—what's the time, Dick? —I forgot last night to wind-up,—very simple case, gentlemen; lies in small compass,—where's the witness?—Dick, swear in Mr. Walter Tyrrel."

The Creole took the book from the clerk with some emotion, and repeated an assenting "So help me God." He then proceeded to relate the occurrences of the evening up to the fatal discharge into the moving fern, suppressing only the verbal directions which he had himself given for the aim of the weapon.

"That will do, sir," said the coroner; and he was adjusting himself to address the jury, when, after a suppressed remonstrance from the foreman, Mr. Jenkins, more untractable than Tablet had anticipated, persisted in putting a few questions to the witness.

"By your favour, Mr. Walter Tyrrel," was his first interrogation, "and I should wish you particularly to call to mind the circumstance, and to take time to consider before answering, Did he jump up a yard high, as they say people do when they are shot?"

"I saw nothing of the kind," answered the Creole.

"That is very odd," remarked the pompous Mr. Jenkins. "Perhaps you will be as good as

inform, sir, where he put his hand first—his side, or his head, or his back? Some say feeling is in the spinal marrow, and some say in the heart, and others say in the brain."

"My observation was not so particular, sir," said the Creole, with a look of annoyance.

"One more question, sir," said the persevering Mr. Jenkins, "and I have done. Perhaps you could name the maker of the gun?"

"Pshaw, anybody you like, sir," interrupted the impatient coroner. "Gentlemen, you've heard the witness—evidence very clearly given,—Dr. Bellamy will favour us with his post mortems."

The personage thus appealed to proceeded with great gravity, and a technical minuteness equally tiresome and revolting, to describe scientifically the complicated injuries the body had received, concluding with his decided mature professional opinion on oath, that the receipt of the united charges of a double-barrelled gun into the human chest would be sufficient to cause the death of the individual.

"Thank ye, doctor, very clear," said the coroner.

"Well, gentlemen, you have heard all—right lobe —left lobe — sternum — laceration — hemorrhage, and so forth—capital evidence—needn't read it over—Gregory, go and order my chaise—gentlemen, I am going to sum up. Here's a young gentleman—heir to a fine estate—an elder brother shot by a younger brother—shot by mistake for a rabbit. You must dismiss all prejudice, and so forth. Very ugly case—can't be two opinions. Gentlemen, you'll consult together—and if there's a doubt you'll give the murderer a benefit,—Dick, take down the verdict."

A pause succeeded for some minutes: the twelve jurors turned round and buzzed together in a corner like so many blue-bottles on a window-pane, and the voice of Mr. Trot at length arose above the rest.

"Fratercide, be d—d. I have heard of homicide and suicide, and I'll take which of them sides you like."

Then there followed a fresh buzzing, during which Tablet convinced Messrs. Jenkins and Trot that there was but one way of being unanimous;

that men of different opinions would never agree between this and doomsday, and that in such a case dinner must be postponed 'sine die.'"

"Gentlemen," said the coroner, "are you all agreeable?"

"Very," responded the foreman. "We are all in favours of Wilful Murder."

"And, gentlemen, allow me to say, a very proper finding," said the magistrate, rising up, "and the only one consistent with the conscientious discharge of your painful duty. In the name and on behalf of public justice I thank you for the verdict you have given."

"And I quite agree with his worship," said the coroner. "Sound judgment—a right decision—very correct indeed. Poor Sir Mark Tyrrel—it's a shocking thing for a father—Dick, make out a warrant—a strange thing, your worship, if the Blues should get their man in—Yellow used to walk over the course. I hav'n't had much shooting this season—I shall come some day, Mat, and look at your birds. By the bye, if you know of a good cocking spaniel—I like 'em oldish and

slow, for I'm getting into that way myself—ready, eh, Dick?—there, give it to Gregory, and catch who can,—it's forty pound. Your worship, I've the honour to say good day,—good bye, gentlemen, you've done your duty,—Dr. Bellamy, your most obedient—Mr. Walter, I'm yours. Look sharp, Dick, for I'm late for the Eagle,"—and, spurred by the anticipation of the election dinner, the coroner departed with an activity and speed that seemed purposely intended to distinguish him from his subjects—the quick from the dead. In fact, before the bowing head of Old Formality rose again to its perpendicular, the personage he intended to honour was out of sight. The stonemason, emulating the example of the doctor, kept obsequiously ducking at the Justice, and the jurors copied every bend of their foreman as regularly as the crew of a cutter take the stroke from the steersman; after which ceremony they hustled out of the room as from a theatre when the performance is over.

The Ranter, eager to exhort the crowd outside, was one of the foremost that quitted the Hall, but

he had scarcely stepped into the air when a shower of paper, in such fragments as are used at a theatre to represent the flakes of a fall of snow, was hurled in his face. It was accompanied by a deep execration from Squire Ned, and an address, in which, contrary to his usual custom, but showing that he was more than commonly moved, he made use of all the pronouns.

"Take it back," he cried, in a voice that thrilled with passion, "Heathen and Infidel in your face, and liar to boot!—have you no more Christian use for pious tracts than to turn them into libels, by laying them on the bodies of the dead? Why, the poor cold breast you put it upon, has more feeling than yours. *You* convert sinners!—*You* draw souls to God!"

"Hark to un, boys! hark to the Squire!" shouted the whipper-in, mindful of his old grudge against the Ranter. "Look at the ugly spiteful face of the varmint. Why, if he comed near my death-bed, I should be like to say, here's the ould one a fetching me afore my time!"

"Take the last of it!" said the Squire, throw-

ing a reserved handful of the scraps at Uriah; "and another time, when you dare to slander a corpse—"

"Lord above!" exclaimed the Ranter, with an appropriate elevation of his hands and eyes, "here's a coil about a broken potsherd, the carcass of a wicked reprobate—fit only for the dogs as ate up Jezabel——"

He was unable to utter more, for the maimed hand of the Squire was at his throat, and a very unequal struggle instantly commenced. Perhaps there were few of the spectators who did not immediately long to be concerned in it, and on the same side; but, with the honourable and peculiar love of fair play that characterises Englishmen, they fell back by common consent, and formed a ring, as inviolable as the lists of chivalry. The contest promised necessarily to be of brief duration, for in bulk and length the Ranter had greatly the advantage, and with his long arms, and a head taller than his opponent, he stood over the Squire like a crane at a wharf, with the apparent power of lifting him at pleasure. In fact, he several

times raised the other off his legs with the greatest ease, but, with cat-like dexterity, the Squire continued always to alight on his feet, so that, though Uriah occasionally tossed him up and down almost like a nurse-maid with a child, he could not accomplish the nursery feat of rolling him on the floor. Once or twice the Ranter tried the "Flying Horse," which consists in the wrestler's pitching his adversary over his own head; but with the quickness of lightning Ned shifted his grip, with his hands planted in the enemy's loins so awkwardly, that the latter was foiled at each attempt. The interest to the spectators became intense. They correspondingly swayed their bodies, and rose on tiptoe, or stooped, in eager sympathy with the motions of the adverse party; they panted, and strung their own sinews, and many a palpitation anticipated the result of a seemingly decisive effort: but coolness, skill, and the inspiriting influence of earnest affection and a good cause, made amends for any physical inferiority, and maintained a struggle of unexpected

endurance. As for Old Mat, who had been a wrestler in his youth, he had long set his teeth, with a determination that would have bitten a bullet in half, whilst his hands were clenched with a grasp almost equal to the cracking of a cocoa-nut, but—in less time than *but* can be written,—giving way it seemed with his heart-strings, and like a stroke of paralysis, his sinews were struck powerless, as he saw the living column suddenly lose its centre of gravity, and descend with velocity towards the earth. The Squire was obviously undermost, yet striking the ground, as it seemed, violently with one foot, and giving way with other, for the evolution was too instantaneous to be distinctly perceived, the position of the falling bodies was reversed, and without knowing how it had been effected, and scarcely believing that it was done, the delighted circle saw the champion of Ringwood rising upon his knees from the body of the spiritual ruffian, who lay stunned upon the ground.

A loud and hearty shout welcomed this grateful

termination of the affray, and, at the same time, suggested to the Squire the impropriety of such a tumult in front of the house of mourning.

"Don't open, boys," he said, "don't open, but go away quietly; I was wrong myself,—but my blood was up to hear *him* abused,—don't hang about, but go home—you've heard the verdict—I say nothing to it—my thought's my own,—I hope you've saddled the right horse, that's all,—" and, turning sharply round, the speaker re-entered the Hall, to resume his melancholy station beside the corpse.

"He's an odd man, the Squire," remarked Tablet, a little offended at the impeachment of the verdict, "and he has odd notions: for instance, that a man with one eye can see better than twelve men with two eyes a-piece;" and, with this sarcastic allusion to Ned's deficiency, he took leave of his brethren, and commenced his stately march down the avenue. But the stranger he had conversed with in the morning had disappeared. As for the Ranter, he had risen from the ground during the Squire's address to the crowd, and was striding

away far a-head, consoling himself with a determination to preach in his own chapel the next Sabbath, from the 4th chapter of Genesis, 10th 11th, and 12th verses, with special reference to the late events at the Hall.

Thus terminated an inquest, the faithful record of which may assist the formation of a decided opinion, by those persons whose minds are still unsettled upon the point, whether, the coroner's court ought to be an open or a close one, and likewise, as to the propriety of remunerating the jurors for such services. It may suggest, besides, some reasonable doubts, whether even surgeons and butchers might not entertain as mild and merciful views as the grazier who fattens the ox for killing, or the cutler who makes the scalpel. The present is not an age for letting any particular class of the community lie under ban; and, perhaps some liberal senator may be induced to entitle Mr. Scales, by bill, to possess common humanity, and declare Mr. Brodie not to be a savage by Act of Parliament.

CHAPTER VI.

What child have I? Alas! I have but one,
And him you would tear from me.
THE ROMAN FATHER.

Have the Fates then conspired, and quite bereft
My drooping years of all the blest content
That age partakes of, by the sweet aspect
Of their well nurtured issue?
TAILOR.

IT is a curious fact, but one which must be familiar to almost every man's experience, that under circumstances of intense anxiety and excitement, the power of the organs of sight and hearing will become extended in a very extraordinary degree. To the eager watcher and the listener, distant objects and sounds are distinctly perceptible, far beyond the range of any other eye or

ear; and the expectant literally receives intelligence as supernaturally exclusive as the announcement to the mourner in the ballad:—

> I hear a voice you cannot hear,
> That says I must not stay;
> I see a hand you cannot see,
> That beckons me away.

Thus, strange as it may appear, the words, and only those, of the verdict found their way upwards through a substantial oaken floor, and were heard by Sir Mark as plainly as if they had been whispered close to his ear. From that moment, but the occurrence was unmarked below, the tramp of his foot ceased, for he had sunk into a chair, and when the Justice at length entered to communicate the result, a significant nod of the head from the Baronet intimated that it was already known, and checked the repetition of the unwelcome words.

"My good old friend!" said the Justice, advancing to the Baronet, and taking his hand between both his own, "I have no comfort to offer."

"God forgive them!" said Sir Mark; "God forgive them! But I think all Christian charity

has left the world;" and rising up hastily, he resumed his walk across the room.—" It was not for me to fly in the face of the laws of my country and oppose an inquest; but I do cry shame on the verdict. With my last breath I would speak up against it; but they have been blooded once, and they would pull down the whole herd."

" My good friend," said the Justice, " be composed; it is a heavy calamity, and the last blow is the worst. But, as Christians, we can only say ' God's will be done.' In arraigning the decrees of human justice, we impeach the divine code in which all laws have their origin."

" I can bow to God," answered the afflicted father; " I can submit to Him who gave and who took away my first-born—but I cannot bow and submit to man, who would deprive me of the other. Next to our Heavenly Father, who judges all, I have as a father the best right to judge my own son."

" That is unquestionable," answered the magistrate; " but, alas! with some rare exceptions, the balance is seldom held so equitably in a parent's

hands, but that if crime preponderated in one scale, he would throw his heart as a counterpoise into the other."

"Aye, heart and head, and life and soul to boot;" exclaimed Sir Mark, earnestly. "I'd stake my salvation on his innocence! But we live in a cruel world: one would think they were neither fathers nor brothers, to open full-mouthed at such a challenge, as if our whole breed had come from Cain: why he was tender-hearted to girlishness, even to bird and beast—and if I had left him to his own gentle ways,—the Almighty forgive me!—his poor brother would be alive at this hour."

"There is but One," said the Justice, "who knows the human heart; and he has told us that it is deceitful and desperately wicked: it is in His power only to know the truth; but as far as human sagacity and penetration, and, I must say, a conscientious exercise of the judgment extend ——"

"Enough! enough!" said the Baronet; "I read your mind. But if Old Mark Tyrrel stands alone in his own opinion, he will go down to the grave

with it—that a murderer never sprang from his loins. That is my judgment on my unhappy boy; and had I a voice that would ring from one end of England to t'other, I would halloo him back this moment to my house and heart."

"I would to God it were possible," said the Justice, "for it would shine like the Scriptural bow of promise on the tears of one who sheds them day and night! Oh, my friend, you may conceive what a Brutus-like trying conflict there has been between conscience and affection ere I could come to such a decision, when I tell you that the fate of my own beloved daughter depends possibly on that of your surviving son."

"Yes, Kate told me something of the kind," said the Baronet, resuming his seat in a musing attitude, "but grief makes us selfish: and I forgot there was a child in the world but my own. Poor Grace—poor Grace—Misery has been running riot at old and young!"

"Till to-day," said the Magistrate, passing his hand across his eyes, "we had fears for her reason. That danger, according to the physicians, is gone

by; but, for my own part, I still tremble at her hallucinations. One whom I will not mention is too obviously in her thoughts; and indeed his name frequently escapes her in her extemporaneous whisperings."

A flush of exquisite agony passed over the countenance of Sir Mark, as if at the sudden application of an unendurable rack, extorting by torture a confession of the presumptuous emptiness of human schemes, and the utter hopelessness of their defeat. It seemed to the afflicted father, as if a divine jealousy of his designs against the dispensations of Providence, had required of him, like a second Abraham, the sacrifice of his son; but unlike the Patriarch, he had not averted the blow by a timely submission. In this spirit of humiliation he took the hand of the Magistrate, and addressed him in a style not the less serious or heartfelt that it was associated with old familiar images.

"My good friend, it is through our own fault that we are so dreadfully thrown out—what is past is past—but we should have done better if

we had listened to another voice than our own. It was my favourite cast towards Hawksley with Ringwood, but the Almighty forbids. I shall never meddle with match-making again. I am as good as down. No buck was ever hit more cleanly—straight, straight, through the heart.—The world's done with me, but I would have the sun shine and the fawns play in it when I am gone. It may please God some day to turn men's hearts and bring back the wanderer to where he was roused—and if he should come to his father's oldest friend, and say 'Let me be your son,' would you say him nay?"

The Justice hesitated. That a murderer should go unhanged was to his mind equivalent to a moral earthquake; but the proposal that the felon moreover should marry his daughter, he considered could only have come from a Father like King David, "mad with grief;" and he was meditating a suitable answer when the door opened and Mrs. Hamilton entered, accompanied by the Creole and Squire Ned.

The Baronet rose up, and with assumed firm-

ness, went to meet his sister, whom he embraced, and then placed her in a chair beside his own.

"I know it all, Kate," he said; "it is a cruel sentence, but I can bear it till I believe it. All the world to one is long odds, but if I stand alone ——"

"No, not alone," said Mrs. Hamilton; "my voice shall rise with yours for the mildest, kindest being that ever breathed. They are murderers that call him so."

"That is true, Kate," said the Baronet; "as well stab a man as his good name. It was never laid to us before. Bating in a field of battle or fair lists, a Tyrrel was never charged with bloodshed."

"Except Sir *Walter* Tyrrel,—who shot King Rufus," said the Squire; and, as he spoke, he fixed his eye so intently on the Creole, that the latter winced under it. The solitary organ seemed to him as that one eye which painters sometimes use as a type of the Omniscient. It was a searching glance that penetrated his very soul; and, from that instant, a new alarm was planted in a bosom

already beset by all the anxious inquietude that belongs to conscious guilt. The course of crime never did run smoother than that of true love; it is equally subject to accidents and obstacles, to rumour, jealousy, suspicion, and detection. Thus, Ringwood was dead; his brother was an outcast, and the father, by his own confession, had received his death-blow: the path to the goal the Creole aimed at seemed straight and open, but at each step unforeseen difficulties arose, unexpected dangers presented themselves, and parties, never dreamt of, threw themselves in the way in attitudes adverse to his success. Hence he proceeded environed with terrors, like a man who is walking upon ice, which every now and then, by an audible crack, gives him warning of the insecurity of his foundation. It was not, therefore, without some internal shudderings and misgivings that he became the auditor of an earnest consultation, how his fugitive kinsman might be discovered and induced to return to a home where he would be received with open arms.

"It is dreadful to think," said Mrs. Hamilton,

"to what rash act this cruel verdict may drive so sensitive a nature: but he ought never to have fled. Had I been you, Walter, I would have clung to his knees; he should have dragged me through bush and briar, through fire and water, before I would have lost sight of him to his destruction."

"My dear aunt," said the Creole, looking down, "I was unprepared for what I did. Now I should, perhaps, act otherwise."

"And sometimes," said the Justice, "in pity to the individual, we forget our duty to the community. Had you apprehended him, Sir, on the spot ——"

"For the love of God," exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, "for my brother's sake—for poor Grace's sake ——"

"Hush, Kate," said the Baronet, with a faint smile, such as state criminals used formerly to affect on the scaffold: "it is only the creaking of the wheels of Jaggernaut. They must not be locked, though I am in the dust before them. But it is the fault of my old friend's head, and not his heart; for poor Grace's sake, Justice, I

would have you speak otherwise; but for my part, I say, issue warrant after warrant; pursue him by land and water; call him a felon, and put him in the dock—and old Mark Tyrrel will stand up for his innocence there as he does now. Yes, if the Judge had his black cap on his head—" and the parent rose from his chair and stood up as if in the very presence he had drawn.

"My good old friend," said the Justice, "I fear your own impression will weigh little against direct evidence; the same circumstances which have just swayed twelve men in their decision would probably influence twelve others."

"Never!" said the Baronet, with great emphasis, "never! I think better of my kind."

"So don't I," said the Squire; "a cross of the murderer in them all—wish you had seen the jury gaping at poor Ringwood: won't shed blood, but like to look at it—like to talk of it—and prefer wholesale to retail;—wouldn't trust the babe unborn with 'em, though that's known to be innocent—sure to be found guilty—and hanged, by Jove!" And the countenance of the speaker

took an ascetic expression that matched his sentiment. Grief acts differently on various temperaments, and with Squire Ned it had taken a querulous tone of discontent with all around him. It would scarcely be exaggeration to say that he felt as much as the parent himself, but he felt in a peculiar manner. In Ringwood, he had lost not merely a son, but a brother, for whom he had all a father's affection without any of his authority. In his heart Ringwood had no rival; it might be said that he loved him, but only liked others.

It was an exclusive absorbing devotion, a sort of idolatry, that might have made him exclaim, "one God, one Ringwood," as a lady of quality said of Farinelli, with a less excusable fervour. The loss of such an object was a total bereavement, as though, like Job, he had lost at one blow, house, children, flocks, and herds. But he did not bear his calamity with the patience of the Man of Uz: the wound rankled, and in the bitterness of his heart he was ready to curse and rail. He mourned, not as the dove mourning for her love, but with a harsh fretful note, at jar with all

creation. Hence his harsh sentence on the jury, an ebullition merely of a misanthropical feeling towards the whole race, for surviving his favourite; and hence the revival of his old suspicions against the Creole, which he adopted with a tenacity that promised he would hate as inveterately as he had loved. To this source must be ascribed a portion of the interest he took in the exculpation of Raby, a person he otherwise regarded with much indifference; indeed, it was inconceivable to his exclusive feelings, and somewhat grating to them, how the claims of the living brother rose in such rivalship with those of the dead. Such a diversion of the parental grief even excited some dissatisfaction; but the subdued sorrow of Mrs. Hamilton appeared, to the distorted mind of the Squire, like palpable apathy, not the less irritating that he accounted for it, by an old imputed preference for the surviving nephew. With all his sympathies thus out of tune, he was accosted by the Justice.

"As a friend of Sir Mark's, I would request your opinion Sir, what measures should be adopted in this distressing crisis? I mean principally,"

added the magistrate, lowering his voice, "with regard to the one who has absconded?"

"Raby, eh?" answered the Squire abstractedly, "advertise—post hand-bills—offer a reward—ferret him out any how—and shoot Brown Bastard."

The conscience of the Creole made him start at the latter part of the sentence, and look anxiously towards the speaker; but Ned's thought had no reference to St. Kitts; it had wandered to an act resembling an old heathenish custom, being nothing less than the immolation of a favourite animal to the manes of the deceased.

"Shoot whom Sir?" inquired the magistrate, his black eyebrows mechanically falling between doubt and disapprobation.

"A horse," answered the Squire hastily, and casting his one eye towards the Baronet. "None of mine, or he should never be crossed again,—nobody after Ringwood."

"Take him Ned—he is your own," said Sir Mark, "but no more shooting; turn him out for life;" and, at this final disposal of his present to

his ill-fated son, the eyes of the father overflowed.

"My dear friend, be composed,—subdue this weakness," said the Justice.

"I have held up," said the Baronet, "till the Squire named his name. It stands for nothing now; but my heart will go towards the sound, though it's a false halloo," and struck by the force of his own comparison, which the fox-hunter will well appreciate, the tears again gushed from his eyelids. "It's all taken out of me," he said, as he brushed away the drops for the second time, "I shall never be a man again," and he recommenced his walk up and down the chamber, but after a turn or two he stopped short in front of the Justice: "You think I'm womanish; I know you do; but I'm dead spent, and out of heart. I've hardly been at rack or manger since he died,—but it's easy for a father who has not lost a son, to say compose yourself, to one that has."

"A man, on a quiet pony, calling out 'hold hard!' to a man on a hard-mouthed, sixteen hands horse, that is running away with him,"

added the Squire, and having given the Justice this taste of his splenetic quality, he unceremoniously left the room, to resume his station near the beloved corse, like Isabella, in the Decameron, beside her pot of basil.

"Poor Ned!—as a hare to her form," said the Baronet, as the Squire closed the door after him. "He's at odds with every thing; but he is hit hard and his wound's sore, it will never heal kindly: mark my words, he will skulk away some day, and turn a hermit, or something of the sort."

"He sits by the dead day and night," said Mrs. Hamilton to the Justice, "and to judge by his manner, to myself especially, he grudges and resents every thought or tear that is bestowed upon the living. It is like the wonderful love of David and Jonathan, except that I doubt if any love can surpass the love of women. For instance, that of poor Grace," she added adroitly, "for my unhappy nephew. If I know any thing of the female heart, she will cling to him the more firmly, because the world deserts him; she will attach herself to his fate the more devotedly,

because it is unfortunate,—the faith she has plighted will become her religion; and you may make her a martyr, but not a convert."

"If I understand you, madam," answered the magistrate, his black brows descending till they mingled with his eyelashes, "the more reason my daughter has to repent her rash choice, the more obstinately she will persist in it; the more convinced of the correctness of her father's views in the past, the less she will confide in them for the future; in short, that she will love your nephew the more, because, by so doing, she will show the less affection for her parent."

"Indeed sir," answered Mrs. Hamilton earnestly, "I am incapable of so slandering our dear Grace. I do not know a daughter less likely to fail in duty and affection than your own, but there is a limit beyond which parental authority ought not to stretch, indeed cannot without presumption; a father may justifiably forbid an improper or imprudent engagement, but in dictating to the affections, and prescribing a given object, he is infringing on the rights of nature, perhaps running counter to a wiser arrangement."

"How madam!" exclaimed the Justice; "a wiser arrangement! is experience nothing? judgment nothing? circumspection nothing? that the child can make a wiser selection than the father?"

"I was alluding," said Mrs. Hamilton, "to a higher power; the same Being who ordained the tides, and gave the heavenly spheres their direction, may concern himself with the attractions and impulses of the human heart—at least we have reason to think so. Do you not *now* bless Heaven fervently, with me, that Grace's affections were not engaged, irrecoverably engaged, to poor Ringwood?"

The Justice was silent to this appeal, but the Baronet clasped his hands with an emphatic "Thank God!" "My good friend," he said, "hark to Kate. It's the first comforting note I have heard. But Providence takes care of its own; I am ripe fruit, and should soon have fallen, if the bough hadn't been shaken, but poor Grace's dear little heart was too young and too good to be broken along with mine. Let us bless the Almighty for that mercy. Had our own wills

been done, we should have been as cruel as the ancient emperor—Maxentius wasn't it? that chained a dead body to a living one."

"I confess the force of the comparison," said the Justice, upon whom a classical example was seldom lost. "I fully coincide in the consolatory reflection, and am truly grateful to the source it came from," here he bowed to Mrs. Hamilton;—"but I should still be more thankful at the escape of my dear daughter from such an afflicting destination, if she were not subject to a dispensation quite as hopeless as the other would have been, and still more subject to acute regret."

"Oh not so—not so!" exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton passionately. "Thinking as you think, it would indeed be a worse fate than the other: it would be desolation and madness—but ask Grace herself, for she had it in her keeping,—ask her could there be a better heart, one more fervent and diffuse in its affection, than my dear Raby's. For his father, his brother, for me, or for his cousin there,"—she pointed to the Creole,—"he would have laid down his life."

The magistrate shook his head incredulously.

"He has not common justice," continued Mrs. Hamilton with increasing energy, "why tax him alone? why suspect none else? why not as soon accuse Walter there?"

"I am *here*, aunt," said the Creole quietly.

"And I would you were elsewhere," retorted Mrs. Hamilton sharply, "seeking for your wronged, slandered kinsman. If harm comes to him, the blame will lie at your door."

"And at mine too, madam," said the Justice, "for if your nephew be anywhere within the three kingdoms ——"

"My thanks, my best thanks, for your cruel kindness," sobbed the lady, and, covering her face with her handkerchief, she hurried out of the room in an extasy of tears.

"After your aunt, St. Kitts," said the Baronet, "and make your peace with her. Poor Kate! There is no generosity like a woman's. Shame on me to say so, but I never loved them both equally, and as she knew the eldest had the call, she gave the best half of her own heart to the

ther. But I am punished for making favourites, —the one I stood upon is gone—and here I am—ruined, ruined for ever!"

"This is a world of trials," said the Justice, "where our sins bring on us punishments from the supreme tribunal as certainly as in the courts below. I am convinced that all our several chastenings may be traced to some such infractions of the divine laws. As such it becomes us to receive the judgment with reverence and submission, and I feel assured that no man will set a better example of resignation and respect to the Power above us than the best, and oldest, and dearest of my friends."

With these words the Justice again took the hand of the Baronet in his own, and a fervent benediction was exchanged, by way of farewell; but when in conclusion Sir Mark attempted to send his love to Grace, it stuck, like the amen of Macbeth, in his throat. Twice he essayed, but the words refused to come, for they conveyed an epitaph as well as a greeting: "see him once again, he will not be with us long," he said in a

broken voice; and arm in arm the two fathers descended to gaze upon a face, pale, cold, and still as marble, but alas! without its durability.

As they entered the drawing-room a favourite black terrier, quite a dwarf, that had been watching at the door, rushed in between the Justice's legs, and took his place beside the body, for he rivalled the Squire himself in attachment and fidelity to the deceased.

"Look at Nip," said the Baronet, pointing out the dog to his companion. "How every thing loved him—down to the brutes!"

"More than some Christians," said the Squire snappishly, perhaps secretly offended at the habitual composure of the magistrate's countenance.

"Nay, I hope not, Ned," said Sir Mark. "At all events it was a Christian-like hand that strewed these flowers and sweet herbs."

"Deborah's doing," said the Squire, still more tartly, "an old fool for her pains!—Don't want 'em—as sweet as a nut." So saying he kissed the cold forehead, and the father followed his example.

"My poor boy, my poor boy," murmured the

latter, as he bent over the remains of his son, whilst for a minute his whole frame shook with a manly struggle to keep down a burst of grief. The Justice in the meanwhile had grasped one of the hands, but not without exciting the peculiar jealousy of the Squire, who watched the action with evident uneasiness; his eyebrows twitched, and he screwed his mouth, as if suffering a pang of bodily pain. "The more he's handled," he muttered, "the sooner he'll change."

The Justice made no answer, but, like the father, turned silently away, whilst the Squire with characteristic eagerness jumped up, to attend them to the door, which he closed behind them, with something of the self-congratulation of a miser whose treasure had been exposed to unhallowed eyes. So diversified are the modes of feeling incident to human nature!

In another, and a distant room, emotions of a very different class agitated a solitary bosom. Instead of following Mrs. Hamilton, as Sir Mark had recommended, the Creole had retired to his own chamber; for the first time breathing freely

as he escaped from a conversation, which had kept his soul in a perpetual pant of anxiety and apprehension. Directly after locking the door, which he did mechanically, he stood stock-still, as if stunned and stupified, and with fixed eyes tried to recollect every word and sentence, some of which had made his very heart flutter in his throat. Above all, his aunt's bitter reproach, and her hypothetical assumption of his criminality, gave him the utmost alarm: he found another person in addition to the Squire, who would watch his future conduct with vigilance and scrutinise it severely; his fear even suggested doubts whether eventually their lives might not become incompatible with the safety of his own. A shudder of horror thrilled him as he contemplated that thus propelled in proportionate progression, the mass of crime increasing like the avalanche in its course, might swell to an enormous amount, involving by necessity the danger of complicated plots and multiplied concealments. The ordeal he had just passed had besides excited in him considerable misgivings as to his own firmness, whether in extremity his

conscience could bear the probe without flinching; nor had he any reason to be satisfied with his skill in playing his part, for in allusion to his sentimental lamentations over Ringwood, the Squire had told him sarcastically that "he sounded like a muffled drum, dismal but hollow."

The decided opinion, and vigorous measures of the magistrate, made it too probable that Raby would be discovered; an examination might lead to a different account of the catastrophe, and the peculiar circumstances under which the homicide had been persuaded to flight. Suspicion would thus acquire a decided direction, and a presumptive motive would suggest itself to account for the share that he had himself had in spiriting away his surviving kinsman. Thus the very persuasion of his cousin's guilt, which had at first appeared so propitious to his schemes, became ultimately a probable source of his own detection, and he felt all the embarrassment and alarm of a thief who finds himself surprised by a fall of snow, wherein he is unavoidaby leaving tracks of his own course.

Most eagerly he adopted his aunt's suggestion, that Raby might be impelled by desperation to some act of suicide; but such a termination was too uncertain to have much influence in allaying his fears, and it was therefore necessary to devise some scheme for ensuring the perpetuity of the other's absence. Joined with these considerations, a more intimate knowledge of the character of Marguerite had raised in him some doubts of the genuineness of the certificate of his legitimacy, and the magnitude of the estates would be apt to produce claimants ready to dispute the validity of the document. The wealth he coveted, and which he had reckoned upon as all but within his grasp, might in this manner pass away from him; whilst on the other hand, his love promised almost to a certainty a successless issue. Every account of Grace's deep grief, and unshaken adherence to Raby's cause, concurred to establish the correctness of Mrs. Hamilton's prediction, that it would prove an attachment which would but become more intense under persecution; and indeed this

part of his prospect had faded almost into nothingness, as when the broad daylight breaks through the tattered remnants of a morning dream.

Even thus frail are the edifices which the wicked erect on unhallowed foundations: fabrics fair but false as the phantom palaces of the fabled Lamia, "whose furniture was like Tantalus's gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions." Indeed the situation of the Creole, enthralled by a similar serpentine sin, closely paralleled that of Menippus Lycius, when before the eyes of the deluded votary of the enchantress, "she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant."

It would be difficult to describe the agony produced by such complicated feelings, especially aggravated as they were by his being alone; a prey to unavailing remorse, with which none could sympathise, to disturbed fears, which none could allay or depreciate, to unlawful wishes with none to participate, to dark and desperate schemings, unadvised, unassisted, unencouraged. In such a gloomy hour, the companionship of a

confederate fiend even might be preferable to utter solitude, and as the Creole yearned for the presence of his designing foster-mother, he pronounced her name with a sigh that bordered on a groan.

The invocation was of some efficacy. It is true that Marguerite did not rise bodily before him, but her image confronted him in his mind's eye, with her black orbs flashing in scorn, and her lip curling into a sneering smile at his pusillanimity.

"Is this Walter Tyrrel?" she seemed to cry, like one of the weird sisters,—"the Sir Walter hereafter? Is this the future husband of Grace Rivers, who resigns his chance because his rival is an outlaw, driven into the bush! Is this the brave defier of Ringwood, whose courage droops when his enemy lies a clod at his foot? He talked of becoming a cayman, but he is dwindled to a mere lizard: he had the aspirings of a young eagle, but his flight is the puny flight of the bonito. He promised to launch thunder-bolts, and is scared at the casting of a squib. Then is he become indeed a bastard, a slave, and the son of a slave, only fit for the

buckra to deride with his tongue, to buffet with his hand, and spurn with his foot."

Thus whispered the devilish spirit of his female Mephistophiles, drowning the small still voice of conscience in his ear, and deadening all the promptings of natural compunction. Unlike the spectral apparitions that alarmed Macbeth, or the processional phantoms that appalled Richard the Third, the evil influence paraded before him a triumphal pageantry, in which the crowning objects of love, ambition, and avarice, bore conspicuous parts, and the flimsy, fraudulent texture of such unholy shows, base forgeries merely to entrap the living soul, was again forgotten. In a mood fit for such a task, he sat down to write to his friend Woodley of St. James's Street, in whose house, it will be remembered, he had advised Raby to seek a refuge. Between this gentleman and St. Kitts there existed an old college friendship, if such a term may be debased to designate one of those heartless leagues, which owe their origin to a companionship in vice and villany. Some underhand confederacy in a gambling transaction

had added to congeniality of disposition the tie of mutual secrecy, and in writing to this party, the Creole knew he was addressing an unscrupulous agent, who would bring to the execution of his wishes both ability and fidelity. Thanks to a triple veil of hypocrisy, and his habitual caution, this feature of the Creole's college character had escaped detection; the remembrance of former successes considerably reassured him on the subject of his future delinquencies, and his style even amounted to levity, in the course of penning the following billet to his old asssociate:—

"DEAR DEUCE-ACE,

"To save troublesome explanations, read the enclosed; seal, and deliver it 'when called for.' The game is good. I hold winning cards if you play well up to my hand. One deal, and out! and the stakes—better than a slam at SPICY!!!

"A snake stopped the march of a Roman army; but would it not be pitiful if my progress up the avenue of Tylney Hall, as its *master*, mind, should be stopped by a worm? Genus, "book-worm." You remember a specimen at college. Moreover,

with a bill of love, signed, dated, and *accepted*, in his hand, he stands between a certain Grace, and a certain graceless.

"You must ship him off somewhere. The sea is not so confined or overstocked, but it may bear another *Gull* on it. I am not so interested in the venture as to require that the vessel so freighted be A 1.

"I must trouble you to stand God-father to him, in giving him an alias, and you may help him to a hundred on my account, but he has means of his own. Scare him heartily, confirm all my *facts*, and enforce all my arguments, I should have said *back* my *gammon*.

"In serving an old pal, a wealthy one that is to be, you may do better for yourself than even by showing your *pluck* to *pigeons* at *Fulham*.

"Thine truly,

"ACE-DEUCE."

The enclosure presented a curious contrast to the preceding epistle: it read like the effusion of what certain old women of both sexes would deno-

minate a very good, moral, and decidedly serious young man. Ecce signum.

"My dearest cousin,

"My heart bleeds to picture the distressing agony that will rend yours on receipt of this painful letter. I have nothing but cruel tidings to communicate, so cruel that I doubt while I write whether I live in a civilised country. Alas! all my worst fears are realised, and even the wildest chimeras of doubt and terror have become real demons howling for your destruction. Within this very hour twelve men, or I should rather call them fiends in human shape, have outraged nature by pronouncing you "Guilty of Murder," the unprovoked premeditated murder of the best of brothers. One would expect the common feelings of our kind would come unwillingly to such a degrading conclusion, but so easily and perversely are our weak frail judgments led astray, and so universally is the clamour raised against you for your blood, that I do not believe upon my sacred honour that twelve men could be found throughout

the whole county to reverse the unjust sentence. Your abiding a formal trial is therefore out of the question. But worse remains to be told. I would some other pen than my own were charged with such an infliction, but even my affection for you imperiously demands that you should honestly know the truth and the whole extent of your danger. I fear that to assure you that I who was present, and eye-witness of our heart-rending catastrophe, and consequently the best judge, have never ceased to lift up my voice in your behalf, as the author of a deplorable but truly accidental calamity; I say I fear that to tell you this will be but a small alleviation of the afflicting and almost incredible fact, that of all connected with you by ties of blood or affection, I stand almost if not altogether alone in this favourable opinion,

"Your father even has suffered his usual excellent judgment to be warped by the examples of his friends, if they may be called so, who are so much your foes. Mr. Rivers is inexorable; he has signed warrants, and despatched runners after you, but you know his Brutus, or rather brutal propen-

sity, to what he miscals public justice. The Squire is actually outrageous; to convey an idea of it, I must borrow the simile of the tigress robbed of her whelp,—he swears, and I believe him, that he could take your life with his own hands. As for your aunt, she is wavering, but I could wish, for the sake of the sex, there had been another more stedfast in her first faith. Summon up, my dear Raby, all your resolution, all your fortitude, all your pride; you must forget her, who is unworthy of so sincere a passion as must emanate from a nature like yours. The fickleness of woman is proverbial, but till now I thought it was a fable.

"The Allwise Dispenser who never sends pleasure unalloyed, as seldom inflicts pain without mitigation; and this loss will alleviate the bitter regret you would otherwise have suffered in leaving your own country. My parting words to you were too prophetical: you must leave England, perhaps for years, till this wolfish rage for your blood is appeased, and the popular mania has been cured, or at least subdued. But this will be a work of time—lose none in the meanwhile I implore you,

—I shudder to think of the consequences of your being taken during this feverish delirium. My pen refuses to paint the objects that belong to the horrible picture of your public execution, for it would be not merely a legal murder, but a massacre in which neither young nor old would be spared. You must place the ocean between yourself and such a catastrophe; but consult my good friend Woodley, there is not a better or abler adviser in existence, and for honour really chivalrous, generosity truly romantic, and a sensibility rivalling female tenderness, he is an unique specimen of what man ought to be, rather than what he is. I need not say confide in him, he will direct your course and furnish the means if required. Do not write here, for thereby you would be traced; enclose all your letters to Woodley, and he will forward them to me; I will personally take charge of their delivery to the right persons, and I shall urge your interests with all the zeal and constancy that a warm sympathy with your unhappy situation can inspire. In happier days, He who searches all hearts may see

fit to turn them towards you, and restore the tide of natural affection to its proper channel. Remember this, and you will not go comfortless; but fly instantly for life, and to escape infamy worse than death. It is hard to cry thus with a heart that yearns to you, for believe me, my dear Raby, all former unkind passages between us are forgotten in your afflicting visitation, or remembered only to my own reproach. Religion will of course be your comfort, as it is mine; and that He who redeemed Israel out of captivity, may rescue my dear Raby from the house of bondage, and restore him to our arms in His due time, shall be the constant prayer of your faithful and loving cousin,

WALTER TYRREL.

"P. S. Trust no reports of the newspapers—the most extravagant rumours are in circulation. Take care of your health. If you think of the Indies, I should say the West, rather than the East; but consult Woodley."

"There," he said, as he threw down the pen,

"I think Marguerite herself could not have schemed better. I consider him as fairly shipped as if I saw the invoice—'One Raby Tyrrel,—marked C. A. I. N., from London direct, to nobody knows whither, and consigned, nobody cares to whom.'"

CHAPTER VII.

"Here I and sorrow sit."

KING JOHN.

"I never heard
Of any true affection but 'twas nipt
With care, that like the caterpillar, eats
The leaves of the spring's sweetest book, the rose."

MIDDLETON.

"She loved him with the disinterested fervour of a woman's love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him; when blasted in fortune; when disgrace and danger darkened around his name,—she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings."

THE SKETCH BOOK.

IT was not without some anxiety that the Justice returned to Hawksley, to communicate the result of the inquest to one upon whom the tidings might have an almost fatal effect. In spite of his own theory of love, the words of Mrs. Hamilton had made some impression on his mind

and although, Brutus-like, he was ready to deliver the only son of his friend to the executioner, he was not quite prepared to plunge a knife into the bosom of his own daughter, without having the fatherly motive of Virginius. The state in which he found her confirmed these misgivings.

If you look overhead, on a clear bright summer's day, you will see the zenith of a beautiful and intense blue; but towards the horizon the sky grows gradually paler and paler, as if heaven itself became dull and tarnished by intercourse with the earth. Even thus the pure perfect azure of love and bliss, which is only to be looked for above, fades away more and still more as it mingles with that moral atmosphere of tears and grosser exhalations which encircles this nether world, till but a faint tinge of the celestial colour at last communes with the distant trees, the mountainous outline, or the ocean level. To this dull grey tint, the blue eyes of Grace seemed to have wept themselves, as she turned them with a look of enquiry on her father, notwithstanding that their hue was advantaged by the pale com-

plexion of her cheeks which had lost all their life-like bloom. The lids drooped heavily over the languid orbs, and the fine arches of her eyebrows were broken and depressed, as if by the weighty cares and sorrows that dwelt above them. She had a book in her lap, over which her emaciated body bent with the languor of dejection and exhaustion; her arms hung listlessly by her side without motion even in one long attenuated finger; her very hair had uncurled itself, and instead of the glossy auburn undulations, whereon the sun used to glance goldenly as in the ripples of a brook, the long straight tresses hung from her marble brow and clung to her white neck and shoulders, as passively as the dark brown seaweed on a mass of chalk.

Even the stern bosom of the magistrate was touched by the sight of his sole beloved daughter, in such a melancholy condition, though his relenting was but as the gradual giving of a hard frost, when the ice changes indeed from a solid to a fluid, but remains almost as cold as before. Unlike those sympathetic natures which receive and

transmit kindly impulses with the rapid intensity of the electric spark, he was formed of some non-conducting materials that reluctantly imbibed and slowly communicated the genial warmth of the affections. With a heart resembling the asbestos in fibre, he could not conceive how another of different texture could consume in the fabulous flames of a passion that had made no such scorching impression upon himself; and consequently, although the altered appearance of Grace excited both tenderness and alarm, these feelings were greatly neutralised by his impression that the case was one which chiefly called for medical interference.

"My dear child," he said, at the same time taking her hand and examining her face with something of the grave professional air of Old Formality, "you look pale, you are unwell."

"It's nothing," answered Grace impatiently—"at least nothing *now*. Tell me——"

"Another time, Grace," said the Justice, with a motion of his hand, that implied a waiving of the subject,—"another time. We will talk of nothing

to day that may shock your nerves. Keep yourself quiet—go to bed early—and to-morrow you will rise I hope as well as ever. If not, we will hear what Dr. Bellamy has to recommend—a visit to the sea-side perhaps, and a change of scene."

"It must be a greater change, that can do me good," answered Grace in a tone as strange as solemn. "A change of which I have no hope."

"A change beyond hope!"—said the father, with a look of the most unaffected surprise. "Either, my dear child, you underrate my affection or my ability; but if even a temporary sojourn, or a permanent residence at Madeira——"

"It concerns not time or place," answered Grace hastily, "or eternity and the grave would be the true remedy. The change I speak of means an alteration in your own modes of feeling, your own modes of thinking,—there lies my grief and one which my heart tells me is incurable."

"My modes of thinking and feeling!" exclaimed the magistrate—"do I not love you more than my own life?"

"And do I not love Raby," asked the daughter

eagerly—"do I not love Raby Tyrrel more than mine? If you care for me, you should care for him. Can you fell the tree, without destroying the ivy that clings to it? Let us fall—let us fall together—but not by the hands of my own father!" and the poor girl pressed her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut out the images she had conjured up.

"My dearest Grace," said the Justice, losing a fraction of his equanimity, "who talks of cutting him off?—he is not even in custody."

"No," said Grace, removing her hands from her eyes, and fixing her gaze on the opposite side of the apartment, whilst she spoke deliberately and with frequent pauses, as if interpreting a threatening hand-writing on the wall. "No—but the hour will come. I ask not to know the cruel verdict—I see it before me in letters of blood—and the name of my own father ratifies the sentence. Oh God! oh God! the picture is no picture. The horrors of my girlhood, the very dream of my childhood, have all come to pass! That awful figure, that pitiless parent, steps out of the canvas, and with a remorseless hand drags me—"

"Grace!" said the father, rather more hastily than his wont, for his tongue had generally the stately pace of a managed horse, "the physicians had, I thought, cured these delusions. For myself, if my performance at all resembles the model you allude to, it should command your reverence. There is but one who can know and appreciate the pangs I suffer in conscientiously acting as one of the viceroys of the Divine Justice. Possibly the culprit who is turned off at the gallows feels less pain in dying than the sheriff who presides at the execution; but what is the amount of their united pangs to the aggregate sufferings of society, provided there were neither culprit nor sheriff? The many must not suffer for the few. By divine enactment all men are brethren, and if a fratricide kills one of my brothers, for the sake of the rest——"

"He is found guilty then," interrupted Grace, speaking hurriedly in a tone that scarcely amounted with all its energy to a whisper.

"The law of God must be kept inviolate,"—said the magistrate, reinforcing his resolution by a text from the Bible. "'Whoso sheddeth man's blood,

by man shall his blood be shed:' that is the scriptural statute—and I have signed his warrant."

"And mine too," exclaimed Grace rising up, "and may it be forgiven you when we all come to judgment!"

"So be it," said the Justice quietly, "that is the highest court of appeal."

For a minute Grace gazed eagerly at the speaker, as if to discover whether this composure was real or assumed, but the only symptom of agitation she could detect, on the minutest scrutiny, was an almost imperceptible contraction and dilatation of the pupil of the eye, a symptom of nervousness, be it noted, which the late Sir Thomas Lawrence observed in every one of his numerous sitters, male or female, with the sole exception of John Kemble. Slight, however, as the sign was, it inspired Grace with a proportionate degree of hope, and with a more composed demeanour and voice, she recommended the volume that had been lying on her knees to her parent's perusal.

"My dear father," she said, as she held out the book to him, "this is no time for girlish secrets:

read these pages; they are the faithful records of a heart and mind of rare excellence. Every line breathes peace and gentleness; an ardent love of nature, and such a tenderness towards the meanest of her creatures,"—here she sighed heavily—"as he is not likely to meet with himself."

The Justice took the book that was offered to him, and a faint smile of pity acompanied his discovery that it was a volume of manuscript poetry. The total inefficacy of such evidence in a court of justice was no doubt present to his mind; he condescended, however, to glance over a few lines, which, like some of Cowper's, expressed a strong abhorrence of destroying even an insect; but the sentiment only elicited the disparaging remark:—

"He is not quite a Nero:—he doesn't like killing flies."

"No, he never took Roman tyrants for models," retorted Grace, provoked beyond filial patience by the cruel allusion to her unfortunate lover.

Her eye rekindled, and her cheek flushed so vividly, that she seemed to have become another person. Like an exhausted body repaired in

energy and animation by the transfusion of blood from a more vigorous subject, the intermixture of the vital interests of Raby with her own imparted to her fresh spirits and strength: her heart rallied, her veins glowed, her nerves were restrung, her mind aroused, and instead of the passive self-abandonment of grief, her feelings took the heroical tone of one prepared to act as well as suffer, on behalf of a life and fame dear to her as her own. In the meantime, her undutiful reply excited the utmost astonishment and anger in her father, to whose ear it sounded like mere blasphemy. He bent on her his severest frown, whilst he addressed her in a tone that implied at once the extremes of amazement, indignation, and reprehension.

"Grace!"

"I am deeply sorry," replied the offending daughter, "for my irreverence, though my injustice was extorted by your own. But you know him not as I do; you cannot—you do not."

"And will not," said the magistrate, in a tone intended to convey that the decision was beyond

appeal. "Roman and tyrannical as you please, I fervently thank my Maker, that in his infinite wisdom he did not frame me for my appointed judicial duties with a heart so flexible, a judgment so infirm, a capacity so limited, and a temper so vacillating, as to be influenced by such idle stuff as this;" and with the conclusion of the sentence he sent the devoted volume whirling across the room.

This indignity towards her treasured keepsake, now a thousand times the more valuable, as the last relic possibly of the writer, was beyond the owner's endurance. She started to her feet, and with outstretched arms and flashing eyes, addressed her father in a voice that seemed to tremble at its own unusual vehemence.

"End not there," she said, "end not there! Cast me from you as well as my book. Reject me, and all that belongs to me. Henceforth you have no child, and I no father. From this hour I renounce all obedience,——"

"Grace!" exclaimed the astounded magistrate, with as much horror as if the whole three king-

doms had revolted against the ruling powers, whereof he was a fraction; "have I lived to see this day!"

"There are worse in store," answered Grace less vehemently, but with equal determination, "worse for us both. You have taught me my duty—that the claims of everlasting justice are superior to the natural ties between parent and child. Be inexorable in your course, and so will I,—though they diverge so that we must part for ever."

"And what is the disobedient path," asked the stern Justice, "that your rebellious fancy suggests to you?"

"A plain one," said Grace, with the calmness that belongs to a resolved spirit. "You call for justice on Raby Tyrrel, and so do I. Let your cruel verdict find its mark. Load him with chains, brand him with crime and infamy, let the whole world desert him, but one heart shall not fall away from him! We were affianced before heaven! I was his in love and joy, and I will be his in love and sorrow. Let him hold up

his attainted hand, he shall have this,"—here she held out her own,—"in exchange for it. I will vouch for his innocence at the altar,—yes, I will marry him,—though it be as the gipsey woman foretold me,—the wedding myself to a phantom, a skeleton!"

"You are mad Grace," said the father, with a grave shake of the head, as if doubtful whether the words might not bear a literal application to her state of mind.

"Oh that I were!" answered Grace, fervently clasping her hands, "that this frightful controversy were nothing but delusion, and the unrelenting parent only a harsh keeper. My reason may fail, but as yet it is unsettled."

"Then it should have reprobated this childish and sinful wilfulness," said the magistrate, with all his austerity. "I presumed nothing short of insanity could make a young female of ordinary modesty and timidity thus fly in the face of her own father! Nothing short of lunacy could persuade her to lift up her voice against that of a whole country, and set up her own judgment in

opposition to the community; but nothing less than the crisis of outrageous frenzy could inspire her with the notion of marrying a felon."

"He is none!" exclaimed Grace, fervently.

"A judge and a jury must decide that question," said the magistrate. "He will have a fair trial."

"A foul mockery," replied Grace, "a compound maybe of sordid timidity, gross ignorance, rash passion, and vulgar prejudice. But who can try him like me? Who can judge him as I can? —It is for her, who held his heart in her hand, who knew every secret of his soul—to say 'guilty or not guilty?' Try him! convict him—sentence him! but I will cry, 'innocent, innocent,' till my last breath. One voice shall speak for him—one hand shall be held out to him! Brand him felon —I will be the felon's wife. The same chaplain that reads the condemned——"

She stopped abruptly. The father started as he saw her drop into a chair with her hand pressed to her side. The hectic flush had entirely vanished, and her eyes had lost all their transient lustre; her own energy had exhausted her, and she

was suffering under an acute spasm. Unluckily the judicial images she had just conjured up, were directly inimical to her influence in her father's affections. The idea of a trial, which would attract the attention of the whole country, only suggested to him a signal opportunity for the display of a stoical virtue unbiassed by the claims of ancient friendship, and unshaken even by the pleadings of filial affection: in short he was mounted on that desperate hobby, with which he was to trample as inexorably on humanity as the rider of the Pale Horse in the Revelations.

Accordingly he had screwed up his nerves to the task; he knit his brows, set his teeth, and compressed his lips; whilst his hands were rigidly clenched, and every muscle stiffened with stern determination. He resolved to be stone—nay, *that* wears away with the dropping of water—he intended to be marble, granite—to become as it were his own statue, and perpetuate himself as the very last of the Romans: but he mistook the material. The block had a soft vein at the core that was fatal to his workmanship; and the stern figure he

had been chiselling fell asunder in fragments. At the sight of his sole beloved daughter, apparently rapidly withering from life into death, his heart relented, not with the gradual melting of a common thaw, but with the violence and crash of an iceberg detaching itself from an arctic region, whence, by an irresistible current, it was separated for ever.

"Grace," he said, with a voice singularly altered in one brief moment, "I knew you had as fond a father, but I thought you had a firmer. The battle is over, and victory is on your side—a decisive one, for I shall never strive again on the same field. I feel I am no Brutus. I was born too late to belong to the Romans—in these degenerate days we are as incapable of supporting their cool impenetrable integrity, as their armour!"

A deep sigh accompanied this confession, an agonising one for a man of the Justice's temperature, for unlike those other enthusiasts the alchemists, who struggled on hopefully from failure to failure, his first defeat was necessarily his last. It should create a more charitable feeling in this

world than is extant, to reflect, that whilst the erring theories of infidels are adopted occasionally with every appearance of sincerity, ingeniousness, and disinterestedness, the sublimer doctrines of Christianity are paraded by professors commensurately and palpably hollow, hypocritical, and time-serving. The essential difference between an enthusiast and a canter, lies in their sincerity; the feelings and sentiments of the first, however exaggerated, demand our reverence; of the latter, our supremest indignation and contempt. On entering a lunatic asylum, the mistaken views of its inmates, who do not see exactly as we do, excite our commiseration; but on the outside of that dungeon, in the broad sunshine of liberty, we pursue a wandering fancy like a mad dog, or rather a dog that has got an ill name, and it is persecuted without any allowance or mercy. Nevertheless such stray opinions are sometimes adopted with much of heroism and a chivalrous devotion; adverse feelings are sacrificed, obvious interests are neglected, and certain penalties are incurred. On this principle, a degree of sym-

pathy may justly be claimed in behalf of the magistrate, whose life-long scheme of reputation had been suddenly reversed. His aim had not been grovelling; his motive was not ignoble; he had aspired upwards, but like Dedalus with his waxen wings, his flight had been frustrated at its highest pitch by an unexpected but natural warmth. He dropped at once from his "pride of place," and the shock was terrible. His balloon had burst like a soap-bubble; and instead of soaring above the heads of his fellows, he was standing on the common level of mankind. But he had been honest in his views. Stern in his love of abstract justice, he had always administered it with rigid impartiality; and he did not now cede to his daughter without weighty scruples at the idea of swerving from his usual unity and integrity of purpose.

"If I understand you, Grace," he said, "you desire that on this unhappy occasion, your father should for the first time relax that vigilance and zeal for the interests of the public, which, as the bounden duty of an upright and conscientious

magistrate, he has hitherto exerted in the discharge of his duty?"

"I do indeed beseech you," answered Grace, "to stand neuter in these dreadful proceedings. For your own sake, I would not have you share in a persecution that must be bitterly repented hereafter."

"Then there is but one course," said the Justice, solemnly; "and I hope, Grace, you will give my love credit for the sacrifice. From this date I resign. I am no longer in the commission."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Grace, fervently, with an involuntary gesture of thanksgiving, conveying but an indifferent parting compliment to a retiring Justice, certainly the most active and zealous that ever sat on the bench. But it had always been one of the first wishes of her heart, though she had never dared to express it, that her father should quit the magistracy, and such an unexpected declaration of an event beyond her hope, betrayed her into an inadvertence. The shade that passed over her parent's countenance, warned her of her error; and she hastened to throw

herself into his arms with such earnest expressions of gratitude and affection, that for the moment the Ex-Justice felt that the preservation of the public peace had been well exchanged for the fostering of private tranquillity. "C'est le premier pas qui coûte"—having once given ground, he relented still farther, and allowed himself to be partly converted by Grace's arguments in favour of the unfortunate Raby.

"I will at least suspend my judgment," he said, "and remand the subject till we have further depositions. But I am talking as if I were still a Justice," he added, with one of his grimmest smiles—which was immediately followed by a sigh.

"My dearest father," began Grace.

"Say no more," said her father, kindly, "you look ill, and I can estimate your struggle by my own. Compose yourself, and let us mutually hope the best. Let the reproach of murder be satisfactorily removed, and since Ringwood is gone, now I am at my confessions, I would sooner bestow you on the son of my oldest and dearest friend, Sir Mark Tyrrel, than any one I know.

Let this idea console you, but not mislead and delude you with too sanguine anticipations—the result must depend on the gist of the evidence, that will prove the animus—as we *used* to call it. All turns upon that. Remember, I pledge myself to no opinion; he may be innocent, or he may be guilty; and I must warn you, that in the latter case I would not even affix my signature to a petition, interfering with the extreme penalty of the law. On the other hand, let him be cleared by the voice of a jury of his countrymen, and I may be induced to sanction your attachment, provided always, that it be accompanied by a due deference to, and recognition of, the vested rights of parental authority."

During the preceding speech, the colour of Grace alternately went and came, and she thrilled and trembled by turns, according to the tenour of each sentence. The allusion to an ignominious death made her shudder, but the welcome promise in the conclusion produced a shower of tears. Her heart was too full to speak, but she eagerly seized and kissed the hand of her father, as he

restored to her the precious volume he had before hurled away from him, an act which imported more kindness than even his words. He affectionately embraced her in return, and thenceforward they enjoyed a communion of love and confidence more perfect than they had ever before experienced.

"I did not expect my career to end thus," said the Justice to himself, as he retired to his study to meditate on what had passed; "I thought I had more nerve, more firmness, more decision of character. I was miserably deceived: perhaps if I had had a son to deal with it might have proved otherwise." Here he ventured to glance at his favourite picture, where, in truth, the sons of the Roman stoic stood prominently in the foreground, with swaggering attitudes and hardened defying faces, as if each was uttering the undutiful boast of the Kentuckian, "My father can lick any body, and I can lick *him*."

"But in a daughter," continued the magistrate, "there is such tenderness, such softness, she seems so fragile a being, and withal so affec-

tionate, that the hardest heart must be touched to tears like the rock in Horeb. However, my trial is past; I have given way; and my official functions are at an end. Conscience will not allow me to continue in them after such a manifest proof of my infirmity. How can he presume to judge others, who judged so mistakenly of himself?"

Well would it be for the world if every censor in it would adopt his concluding sentiment. Men are too prone to view their own errors and failings with indulgence, whilst they visit those of others with unsparing reprehension. Every one seems turning as it were God's evidence against his neighbour, as if by impeaching his fellows he was exonerating himself from the penalty. The worst constructions are put upon dubious motives, malicious meanings are extracted from careless expressions, the scratch of a stray jest is taken as a deliberate wound; in short, if the multitude of our sins depend upon charity for a covering, the fabric is so scarce that the poor peccadilloes cannot have a suit a piece, unless such a one as

belonged to the decayed Spanish gentleman, which was all slashes. On the other hand, should the tide turn, the kindly impression is communicated so reluctantly, and adopted so tardily, that the charitable impulse comes commonly too late to be of service to its object. It is generally difficult, besides, to make the amends proportionate to the injury; indeed in some cases it is impracticable, as was well illustrated by the remonstrance of a foreigner to a gentleman who had horsewhipped him by mistake. "Sare, you apologize at me, you shake hands to me, you beg pardon from me, but can you *unstrike* me?"

An occurrence in the ensuing chapter will serve to develope this moral.

CHAPTER VIII.

" There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like the standing pool,
And do a wilful stillness entertain
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark.'"

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

" Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer,
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier,
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind
Without the meed of some melodious tear."

MILTON.

THE flood rapidly subsided, but left behind many tokens of the extent of its ravages: amongst others, as already recorded, was the destruction of the little bridge between Hawksley and the

Hall, a circumstance productive of some embarrassment to an unsuspecting pedestrian, who had expected the assistance of the ruined fabric in passing over the brook.

"Humph! a regular pull-up, right on my haunches," exclaimed the man, as he came to a full stop on the bank. It has never yet been explained by phrenologists why men should scratch their heads when puzzled, but it is certain that no sooner did this difficulty present itself to the way-farer, than his hat was off in one hand, while the fingers of the other hunted through his short yellow scrubby hair, like a team of spaniels in a field of stubble. At the same moment he fixed his eyes on the stream, and with all his might began to ponder what substitute could be found for a bridge, a deliberation to which Lavater would have assigned a very distant termination, for of all countenances ever created, that of Master Goff, one of the country constables, had the least expression of sagacity or intelligence. It was certainly no superabundance of brain in the interior that made his two heavy

eyes with their lids protrude from their sockets like two well poached eggs, except that in place of the yolks there were two globes of the dull greenish brown of a fowl's gizzard; his nose was absolutely devoid of character or meaning, a mere mushroom-button; while his mouth, round and open, reminded one irresistibly of a silly fish making itself up to take a minnow. Ponder as intensely as he liked, with such a face he could only appear to be going to sleep with his eyes open. To those who are not familiar with the workings of our admirable constitution, it may seem strange that justice should be provided with such a doltish auxiliary, forgetting that, from the days of mythology, she has been notorious for playing at blindman's buff, at which game, with a fillet before her eyes, she must take the first she can lay her hands on, from a Chief Justice downwards. Thus the sapient Peter Goff had been thrown in her way when she was groping about in the dark for a constable, an injudicious mode of selection, by the way, almost equal to pricking for sheriffs with the eyes wide open.

At last the cogitator's mind produced its fruit; but like most of his thoughts it resembled a Michaelmas peach, which takes a weary time in ripening, and is worthless after all.

"Well, I can do as much as most men, but I can't go over a bridge if there isn't none."

After such a specimen of his conclusions it will sound preposterous, but it is true, that this straggler behind the march of intellect was in his own conceit a grenadier striding at its head; but there are no bounds to human vanity, it is one of those features which it is impossible to caricature. Many a man, as well as maiden, mistakes his forte, and strums upon it with as much self-complacency as an acknowledged proficient. The favourite theme of Goff's sonatas was his own astuteness, or, as he termed it, cuteness, in token whereof many a nod of his chuckle-head, many a wink of his dull eye, and many an application of his fore-finger to the side of his insignificant nose, hinted at superior shrewdness, whilst his common-place remarks were enforced by an emphatic thump of his club stick upon the ground. This assumption made him

particularly jealous of any attempt to bestow information upon him, which was always met by one of his oracular signs of intelligence. He affected a foreknowledge of everything, and as a natural consequence knew little or nothing; so that as was sarcastically said of him, in reference to his pursuits, "he could hunt a criminal at sight like a turnspit, or pick out the scent like a greyhound," a saying the slow-witted constable construed for the first five minutes into a compliment. As usual, this functionary had a satellite, who, unlike the celestial ones, was considerably brighter than his principal; he was really a sharp active fellow, as superior in sense and sagacity to his master, as a well-trained pointer is frequently to the biped in fustian who plods behind his heels.

"I say, master," cried the follower, as he came up, "here's a pretty obstacle."

"It used to be," answered the other, with a sort of chuckle, "but now it's no part of the prospect."

"It will give Greggy the start, though," answered the man, commonly called Tippy, with

some reference probably to his acceptance of an occasional bribe.

"Greggy be hanged," said the constable; "he may do some of your slow ones, but he's no match for me," and thump went the stick.

"But here we are on the wrong side of the water," said Tippy, and "Nick Ferrers told me that Squire Raby——"

"Thank ye for nothing," interrupted the constable, with a wink; "I knew it long afore Nick Ferrers."

"He's a shy cock," said Tippy, "but he'll try his old haunts, most likely: I'll lay a gallon Miss Rivers knows where."

"To be sure," answered the constable, with a wise nod; "say I told you so. I'll tell you what, Tippy, he'll be somewhere's about his old haunts."

"I wonder if this water's fordable," said Tippy, with a look of appeal towards his companion.

"If any body knows, I ought," said the constable, pompously, "I've lived in the parish these forty years, man and boy."

"Where's the ford, then?"

"Never mind that, Tippy, we won't wet our feet, we'll go round by the road."

"Why, to be sure, if *we* can't cross the water, *he* can't, and so the road will be the likely place to fall in with him."

"Just what I meant, man," said the constable with a wink; "but you're dull, Tippy—it's a dull day with you," and the oracle gave a grave shake of his head.

"Perhaps if you was to go by the road," suggested Tippy, "and I was to wade across the water——"

"To be sure," said the constable; "it's what I've been driving at all along, but you don't take—ain't I a regular deep one—eh, Tippy? let me alone for a scheme—he's grabbed as sure as I stand here," and his stick again tested the solidity of the terra firma. "He's limed, Tippy—he's trapped—mark my words he is—and, in that case, he's as good as caught."

The follower made no answer, but proceeded along the bank, looking out for a shallow part of the brook where he might wade over, and he had

gone about twenty paces when he suddenly stopped, and bending down over the stream gazed intently into the water. At last, having satisfied himself of the nature of the object, he turned round and hallooed to the constable to come to the spot. Accordingly, with due deliberation, for Master Goff moved bodily as well as mentally as slowly as a tortoise, he arrived at the place, where, stooping down as the other had done, he stared at the water but without perceiving anything except the mere element with his own stolid countenance reflected on the surface.

"Do you see anything?" asked Tippy.

"To be sure I do, I have eyes in my head," and he winked at his own image.

"It's the flap of a man's coat," said Tippy, in an undertone.

"I know it," answered the constable, telling one of his habitual lies, "it's a bottle green one, with gilt buttons."

Unluckily for the speaker's assertion, a strong eddy of the current brought the skirt gradually towards the surface proving obviously that it was

a black one. It would, probably, have sunk down again before the constable had thought of the propriety of catching hold of it, had not Tippy thrown himself on the ground and seized the cloth.

"By the weight," said the latter, "there's a body to it."

"That's just what I expected," said the constable, "and between you and me, I have a notion who it is."

"Who?" asked Tippy.

"That's tellings," returned the constable, "some folks see further than other folks,"—a nod and a wink at once. "You'll see when he's pulled out."

"Lend a hand, then," said Tippy; and with some difficulty, they raised the body, and deposited it on the grass, by the side of the brook.

"Poor fellow!" ejaculated Tippy, after a long look at the corpse, "what shall we do with him?"

"Stand him on his head, to be sure," said the constable, "to run the water out—that's the most reviving thing."

"It might have revived him two or three days ago," said Tippy.

"Aye, three days, or three and a half—that's just my own calculation," said the constable; "any body may see that by his appearance—he's monstrous swelled, sure*ly*——"

"Is it the man you mean?" inquired Tippy.

The constable nodded, "It's him, Tippy, and no mistake."

"For my part," said Tippy, "his face is so swelled, and bruised, and battered, I shouldn't know him if he was my own born brother."

"Nobody said you could," answered Master Goff; "some folks are slow at guess-work, but others ain't. I know what I knows."

"What's that?" asked Tippy.

"No matter—that's neither here nor there," answered the constable, with a succession of important little nods. "I'll tell you what, Tippy, it's lucky I'm here—two heads is better than one."

"Hadn't we better search his pockets?" asked the sub, obsequiously willing to humour the foible

of his superior, a course of conduct which he anticipated would lead to Goff's standing treat at the next public-house.

"The very thing I was a going to propose," answered the constable, "if you had not seconded my motion."

The sub did not reply, but proceeded to examine the pockets of the deceased, giving a verbal inventory of the articles as he proceeded—

"Here's—no, there's nothin whatever in his leathers—yes there is, though—two bullets: left coat flap—a little book in print—called the Fiery Queen—right flap a white cambric handkerchief marked—R. T.: right hand waistcoat—a guinea—and a dollar, and a sixpence: left hand—a silver pencil case—a little key—name on the pencil case—Raby Tyrrel——"

"You don't say so!"—exclaimed the constable, snatching the implement from the other's hand, and poring at it long enough to have deciphered a Chaldee inscription. "Then all I can say is there never was a worse day's work."

"For poor Sir Mark—God help him!" said the

sub, whose calling had not yet blunted all his better feelings.

"That's very true;—but you don't take, mun, you don't take," said the constable; "you don't look at consequences as I do—you've no 'cuteness. What I meant were this. You must sympathise with yourself."

"As how, master?"

"Ay, I knew you would ask me that!" said the Solomon, drawing himself up, preparatory to giving his companion what he called a furbishing. "As I said afore, you never foresee nothing till it's come to pass. That ain't *my* way. But there's as much difference atween men as between calves and kittens—one's born with his eyes open and t'other ain't. I won't name names—it ain't your fault, it's your natur; but though I say it as shouldn't say it, I'm quite the reverse. For my part, I roominate,"—here he fixed his dull eyes in a stare upon vacancy. "I preponderate,"—he put his forefinger to his forehead,—"and that's how I penetrate. For example, here's my

thought at this present. A dead man isn't a 'live un."

"That's undisputable," said the sub.

"Secondly. Drownding isn't hanging."

"That's gospel," said the sub.

"Thirdly. If there's no trial, there can't be no conviction."

"I'll take my 'davit on it," said the sub again.

"That's logic then; that's what I call knock-me-down," said the constable with a triumphant stumping of his stick. "There you have it; now you've got my meaning as plain as a pikestaff, Tippy."

"I think I can guess," answered the sub. "You mean the reward; and sure enough, there's all our yellow-boys ringing as bad as dumps."

"My very words, if you'd give one time," said the constable. "If you ask my opinion, we're had. We're done, Tippy; it's a bite. There's amen to forty pound, that was as cock-sure as if I had it here,"—and he slapped his pocket.

"And what's to be done with the guinea and the sixpence?" inquired the understrapper.

"And the dollar, Tippy?" added the constable, with a nod and a wink. "Why, we must keep'em as a dividend, like. But mum for that."

"Or somebody will be crying snacks," said the sub. "Yonder's the keeper."

"Just what I expected," said the constable, with a nod. "Hark ye, Tip. Don't you put in a syllable. Leave me to deal with him. He's a deep un, you'd be pump'd dry in a minute. It requires 'cuteness—I'll be as sly as a fox—trust me for that; if I don't hold my own with him, my name's not Goff."

"Suppose I put the book and the handkerchief back again, suggested the sub; and let the keeper find 'em himself?"

"I was coming to that by and by. Not amiss for you though," said the constable, with a patronising air. So saying, he stooped down and replaced the article he had taken into his own possession, in the pocket of the deceased, while

the sub replaced the book and handkerchief. The keeper came up shortly afterwards.

"Bless my heart, masters—here's a pitiful sight!"

"You're correct so far," said the constable, nodding, and folding his arms by way of making himself up for a furbishing. "Do you know who he is?"

"Not an idea on it," answered Mat. "His face have been sadly mauled by the water varmint: and he be all swelled and bruised. Do you know him yourself?"

"Don't I!" said Goff, smiling, and throwing a knowing wink at his assistant. "I smoked him at the first sight. But it's my office to sniff out people, felons and so forth; and it's yours only to find out game. I'm reckoned a bit of a dab at it, too, an't I Tippy?"—to which Tippy assented with a nod.'

"Hold up, then," said the keeper, "and let's see your point.''

"Yes, yes," said the constable, "when you're

in the dark, you all come to *me* to strike a light. I'll hold a gallon o' beer you don't name him in three tries."

"No, no—it's an unproper subject for betting on," said Old Mat, with a pious feeling towards the dead, that accorded with his character. "But I'll guess, however. Mayhap it's George the saddler, and a bit of a poacher besides, to give un his due: folks do say he's a-missing since the flood?'

"Guess again."

"Mayhap, then, it's young Tom the miller, for he's a-missing too?"

"Miles off—you never shot randomer," and the constable shook his head. "Now you shall hear mine. Anybody can guess at hap-hazard; but preponderating, and roominating, and digressing is another thing. As for me, I always concur with myself,—I call it comparing notes. I've my own reasons; but putting this and that together, if that's any body's body, it's the body of one as ought to have ended otherwise;" and the speaker

clapped his hand with a significant gesture under his left ear.

"What, Master Raby!" exclaimed the gamekeeper, and he took a long gaze at the body from head to heel. "It have a likely look enough. It's just the sort of trim for such as him to go a-shooting in, half sportsman and half schollard. Them cords and gaiters are well enough, but the silk waistcoat, and that jaunty black coat's any thing but the proper wear for our stiff covers."

"Say I told you so," said the constable, with a knowing wink. "The toggery was the first thing I twigged. But I went by many more things besides."

"You searched him, mayhap?" said the gamekeeper.

"We were going to," said Tippy, "when you came in sight."

"But says I, don't be precipitous," and the constable gave his follower a reproving frown for his interference. "We'll have t'other witness, that's what I call prudence."

Old Mat without answering went down on his knees, and proceeded forthwith to satisfy himself of the truth, by searching the pockets. "Here's one of his marks for certain," he said, as he held up the little volume of Spenser: the handkerchief corroborated the conjecture; but the pencil-case placed the identity beyond all doubt. The old forester immediately rose up, but, he was unable for a moment to give his thoughts utterance.

"The wretched boy!" he said, at length; "so he have been sinfully driven, after all, to make away with himself. But I always said he could never abide it—his days could never be lightsome agin, with such a guilty conscience. But he's dead, and that pays all,—it be a thousand pities though he ever turned up. I can't fret for him, like the young Squire, for it's only a judgment come home to him; but a father's a father, and if Sir Mark have a whole string left in his heart, here is the sight as will break it!"

"All these reflections have been made afore," said Goff, with a wave of his hand, for he was jealous of this interference with his performance

as first fiddle. "It's time to act, that's my principle; talking don't do like doing. When I've preponderated, I'll give you directions."

"I'll tell you what," said Mat, apparently musing, "It won't do to go right on end to the Hall with it. We'll carry the body to my lodge, and there we can send after a shell, while somebody goes and breaks the news up at the house."

"Not a bad move," said the constable; "I had one to match. As for the breaking it, that's quite in my own line. I take it on myself. Some would come plump out with the truth; but that isn't my advice. For my part, I like to be mysterious, to be off and on as the saying is. I warrant I'll beat about the bush so, the Baronet shan't know what I'm driving at, any more than the man in the moon."

"Fall to work, then," said the forester; "we shall want a few boughs, and an armful or two of fern to strew over."

"Teach your grandmother!" exclaimed the self-sufficient constable, with a nod and a wink; but he did not disdain, notwithstanding, to imitate

practically every movement of the old gamekeeper, by whose exertions principally a rough litter was formed, similar to that which had been used for transporting the body of Ringwood. It was under a serener sky than in the former instance, that the bearers took up their melancholy burthen: as they progressed across the park, the deer sported around them, the hares chased each other in rings, the wood-pigeons wooed each other in the trees, and the squirrel gambolled along the path, even as they had been bidden, in a verse, by the gentle Raby, now of touching import, in reference to his own ungentle fate.

> Each furr'd or feather'd creature!
> Enjoy with me this earth,
> Its life, its love, its mirth,
> *And die the death of nature!*

As soon as the corpse had been deposited at the lodge, Master Goff repaired to the Hall, to communicate the dismal tidings. His important bearing, and the nature of his office, procured him easy access to the Baronet, whom he found sitting in the library in eager expectation of receiving intelligence of his fugitive son. But this anxiety

only retarded the disclosure: at every question the constable stopped and drew in his horns like a snail, so that the Baronet was fain to leave him with all his tediousness to his own course, which he pursued with characteristic absurdity. Unlike the admirable overture to Der Freyschütz, which with dreadful note of preparation forewarns the startled auditor of impending horrors, the constable's prelude did not contain one syllable anticipatory of the catastrophe it was intended to announce. He began by a truism, that it is the nature of water to drown people, and in illustration he detailed the loss of Mrs. Worrall's sow and pigs by an irruption of the late flood, from which he wandered into a dissertation upon the advantages of knowing how to swim, and then came the tragical story of a village Leander, concluding with an original process for "rescuscitating the drownded." Such an exordium was little calculated to arm the hearer against a sentence which, like the electric "Tu Marcellus eris" of a greater orator, smote as suddenly as severely.

"There's nothing more dangerous," said the

obtuse reporter, "than to go over a bridge of a pitch dark night when it's washed away, and to my mind that was the case with poor Master Raby!"

The effect was such as to greatly minister to the conceit of the egotistical speaker. He mistook the stillness and silence of Sir Mark for composure and resignation, and lauded himself accordingly, for he attributed all this apparent calmness to his able and considerate manner of broaching this new misery. But he found himself egregiously deceived when, after a long pause, the stunning result of so sudden a shock, the bereaved father rose suddenly up with the mien of a wounded lion and addressed him with angry gesture, and a terrible voice, deep, hollow, and broken.

"Out of my sight!—vermin! out of my sight! you have mobbed him to death amongst ye! Don't tell me of broken bridges—he was hunted and worried like a wild beast—and that made him rush to his Maker. You've pulled him down, body and soul—body and soul—and the curse of old Mark Tyrrel light on every one, great and small, that had a hand in it!"

The terrified constable awaited no further dismissal, but sprang through the door, and retreated along the passage with a celerity that increased as he heard the footstep of the Baronet behind him: nor did he feel quite safe till he arrived in the kitchen amongst the domestics, whom he threw into consternation by declaring in a breath that Raby was drowned, and Sir Mark had gone raving mad on the spot. But the latter had no idea of pursuit, he ascended to the drawing-room, where the Squire was keeping his usual watch beside the dead body of Ringwood, which, under his direction, was now lying in a sort of state that had formerly been bestowed only on the heads of the Hall. For a minute or two, the father's presence was unnoticed; such visits had frequently passed over without a word on either side; but a vain attempt at articulation made the Squire look up at Sir Mark, who, with working features and labouring chest, still struggled for utterance, whilst his finger remained pointing at the corpse. By a violent effort, he at last mastered voice enough for a few syllables.

"There is—another coming."

A slight nod from the Squire intimated that he comprehended the announcement, which he received with less concern than surprise, for his feelings were more than ever absorbed and concentred within the narrow space occupied by Ringwood's coffin; indeed every hour his exclusive affection seemed to become more intense as the day approached which was to separate him from even the mortal remains of his favourite. Under this influence, such tidings grated on his ear and excited his peculiar jealousy.

"Not *here*," he said, "better in another room——"

"No," answered Sir Mark, and the fatherly impulse gave him temporary firmness, "they came of the same stock—they were brothers—there never *was* ill blood between them—and they shall lie side by side."

The picture the last words conveyed overcame the speaker's fortitude.

"Oh, Ned!" he exclaimed, in a choking voice, "two at once—two at once—" and the strong man

bowed himself under his double affliction, and wept and sobbed like a little child. The Squire's heart was touched at the sight, but he offered no attempt at consolation, for he could find none in his own case. He merely averted his eye and fixed it on its old object, leaving the mourner to his sorrows without witness or restraint. The death of Raby claimed little of the Squire's sympathy, but it caused some curiosity, and after the first burst of parental grief had subsided, he inquired in his abrupt manner how the event had taken place.

"I fear, by his own act," answered Sir Mark, "the Almighty forgive him!—But he was cruelly beset—if he had been the wild boar they call him he would have turned at bay; but he was more like a hare, poor fellow!—fearful and gentle—so he took to water and sunk."

A sudden cry, and a bustle overhead, intimated that the evil tidings had reached the ears of Mrs. Hamilton; a sound that was superseded by the long doleful wail of Tibbie Campbell. However unapt to imbibe or follow English notions and fashions, the warm-hearted Scotchwoman was

keenly alive to those kindly feelings which belong to our common nature, and her adoption and domicile at Tylney Hall had begot almost a clannish attachment to the family and its fortunes. Besides her devotion to her mistress, she had learned to reverence Sir Mark, and to take pride in his two bonny sons; and in her coronach for the untimely fate of the hopes of the house of Tyrrel, there mingled some national notes which, perhaps, belonged in strictness to the race of Mac Callum More.

The Creole, meanwhile, was abroad, engaged in earnest colloquy with his foster-mother, who had waylaid him in his ride. He had bared before her the whole secrets of his bosom—his hopes, his fears, his schemes, his wishes, his misgivings, and his scruples, the last of which Marguerite treated with ineffable contempt.

"He who fears to confront death," she said, "is unfit to live. You shudder at a little blood—you shrink at the extinction of a single life; and yet, at your uncle's bidding, you were to enter the army! Call it glory, and your hand was prepared

to slay, till it matched the scarlet of your coat—to rise from cornet to captain, from colonel to general, you would wade knee-deep in gore—but to become Sir Walter Tyrrel, with a revenue equal to raising regiments of your own, you object to a blow that is not even to come from your own hand! Should Raby return, Ringwood has been hated and Grace Rivers has been loved in vain. The stroke that removes him will only anticipate the law, it will be attributed to his own act—but I am wasting words, you shall be Sir Walter Tyrrel in spite of yourself. Perhaps, while I speak, there remains but one bar between my prophecy and its fulfilment!"

They parted as usual, Marguerite indulging in an unrequited embrace, and St. Kitts returned to the Hall to find the prediction of his foster mother literally come to pass. The two brothers who had stood between him and the promised inheritance were turned to clay, and the father heart-broken, and doomed to death, grieved over them as they lay side by side in their coffins.

The second catastrophe was known as rapidly

and universally as the first, and the public opinion underwent a remarkable change. Every harsh word was retracted, every rash judgment repented. All the courteous gracious kindliness of the gentle Raby, all his good actions and generous deeds, were charitably recalled, and instead of a monster he became a martyr. No one talked any longer of the atrocious fratricide, but all tongues were eloquent on the bereaved condition of Sir Mark Tyrrel, deprived accidentally of two such incomparable sons.

At Hawksley, as poor Grace had predicted, this remorseful re-action of feeling occasioned peculiar anguish. The inflexible Justice had relented, he had made an important sacrifice for the sake of his only beloved daughter, but it had been done too late. The surviving son of his oldest friend had sunk under a general persecution, of which he could not acquit himself, and in requital he saw his own child smitten with sudden decay, robbed of her youth, faded and withering

——————Like a palm,
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

Thus ended all speculation on the guilt or innocence of Raby Tyrrel. A fresh jury was hastily summoned, as the case demanded, and the coroner was again in requisition. The second Inquest occupied even less time than the first, and a verdict of "Found Drowned" was recorded, thereby avoiding the disgusting formulæ of four cross roads and a stake through the body, a custom which is happily now "more honoured in the breach than the observance." By this decision, the body was allowed to be deposited in the family vault, whither, on the morrow, the kindred corses were conveyed, attended by an unusual concourse of persons of all ranks; and on the following Sunday, the funeral sermon was preached by Doctor Cobb, taking for his text, at the especial request of Sir Mark, the beautiful and affecting words of the lamentation of David,—

"Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided."

CHAPTER IX.

" I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve; give me not counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

" There's nothing that I cast my eyes upon
But shows both rich and admirable; all the rooms
Are hung as if a princess were to dwell here;
The gardens, orchards, every thing so curious!
Is all that plate your own too?"

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

THE funeral day was at an end, with all its gloomy mockeries and dreary vanities. The friends or professed friends of the family had all departed except the Squire, and Mr. and Mrs. Twigg, whose carriage was at the door: the two latter were screwing up their faces to the proper dolorous expression for a farewell when the Squire

entered the room. He had his hat on, and the little black terrier was under his arm. He walked straight up to the Baronet, and addressed him in an under tone.

"Don't want Nip?"

"Take him," answered Sir Mark.

They shook hands silently and slowly, during which process Ned fixed his one eye intently on the altered face of his old friend.

"Hold up," he said, and, with these two syllables, he wheeled abruptly round and departed, without taking the least notice of any one else in the room.

It was now the Twiggs' turn, and they had evidently made up their minds to take a more elaborate leave than poor Ned's. The master of the Hive walked gravely up to Sir Mark, whilst the mistress applied herself to his sister.

"My dear, dear Mrs. Hamilton," she said, "you must rouse. Don't take on, pray don't; you musn't sit and mope—there's nothing worse for the spirits. You must employ your mind. I remember, when my own poor mother died I

couldn't find comfort in anything till I took to polishing a mahogany table."

"She is quite right," said Twigg, to the brother, in the same serious affectionate tone. "My dear Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, don't encourage grieving with idleness. Activity's the thing; sitting with your hands before you won't do. You must bustle it off. Go through your accounts with your steward. Look after your property."

"You must jaunt about," said Mrs. Twigg to the lady, "and pay visits. Go among all your friends—I needn't name the Hive. Go every where—gad about—the more the better—and by and by you'll pick up agin. Disperse yourself as much as you can."

"You must hunt away," said Twigg, to the Baronet; "you musn't give up any of your sportings. They'll help to work it off. If I was you, where I hunted one fox afore, I'd hunt two or three at once. That's the way, says you, to git rid of trouble."

"Living low," said Mrs. Twigg, "is quite a mistake—it always produces lowness. Appetite's everything; force yourself to eat; humour your

stomach,—no matter how trifling. Get cook to toss you up every hour in the day,— a little and often."

"Take a glass extra," exhorted Twigg; "grief sometimes gives way to a little conviviality."

"Nobody can fret long upon nothing," continued Mrs. Twigg "good porter is very supporting. Taking care of ourselves for our own sakes is a duty to others. If you catch yourself thinking of your two nevies—have a sweetbread."

"You must forget everything," said Twigg. "You've lost both your sons in a very shocking way—and you've no heir of your own to your property. There's three gone within a very few years—the Colonel, and Ringwood, and Raby—but you'd be wrong in recalling; you must think of them, and picture them to yourself, just as if they had never been born."

"Take my advice," said Mrs. Twigg; "don't pine, but have a good hearty cry—it's the most relieving thing in the world next to a skreek. Carry salts about you to sniff at, and always have water handy in case your head's inclined to swim."

The suffering patients listened to these various

prescriptions in silence, with sighs and shakes of the head; but the officious couple now made an offer apiece which extorted immediate and earnest answers.

"There's nothing worse," said Mrs. Twigg, "than solitude and loneliness, except it's darkness. Burn a rushlight. But solitude's bad too; you musn't keep yourself to yourself. You want somebody to stir you up. The more gossipy and rackety the better—family duties won't allow my own coming to stay with you, but there's nothing of the sort to prevent 'Tilda—she'll be a prop."

"Oh, no," answered Mrs. Hamilton, eagerly, "not for the world, you mustn't think of it."

"Yes, you'll feel a great change," said Twigg to the Baronet; "death makes gaps in families that can't be filled up; you'll miss 'em sadly when it comes to being alone. It's a slack time o' the year for business—and if my son, T., junior, would be society for a bit, let him come, says you—and he's down by return of post."

"No, no, no," said the Baronet, decidedly; "I'm obliged all the same, but Kate and I must

comfort one another, the rest must come from above."

"True," answered Twigg, "religion will be a standing article, of course—and Him who tempers the lambs to the shorn sheep—I know what you mean, says you, though it's not quite the words. God bless you, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet,"—and they shook hands.

"God bless, you my dear," echoed Mrs. Twigg contriving by a little jump to kiss Mrs. Hamilton, "I'll come and console as often as I can;" and the two comforters departed, perfectly persuaded that they had lightened the inmates of the house of mourning of a load of grief.

It was not till the carriage had rolled out of the avenue into the high road, beyond the domains of the Hall, that the ambitious couple ventured to communicate to each other the mutual thoughts that had occupied them during the day. Twigg then opened his mind cautiously, and the following colloquy ensued in the dark.

"Well, my dear, did you go all over the Hall?"

"I did, my dear, every room in it."

"Well?"

"All very good and substantial,—and most delightful bed-rooms; but there's a want goes all through the house."

"And what's that, madam?"

"Cupboards," responded Mrs. Twigg, to whose ideas the greatest merit of a dwelling-house was that of a merchant-ship, namely, "extensive stowage."

"Cupboards be hanged! Did you see the cellars?"

"No, my dear, but I did the butler's pantry."

"Well?"

"There's mines, Mr. T.! Heaps upon heaps of gold and silver plate; not all fillagree and open work, but solid and massy. Such waiters! such cups! such dishes!—But theres' one thing awkward."

"What's that, madam?"

"Why they've all got stag's heads on 'em, and ours is a bee."

"Fiddlesticks, madam."

"To be sure, all that may be altered and eradi-

cated to match. We can turn the bees into little deers."

"If you please, madam, you'll keep your fool's tongue in your head. It ain't as if we were in possession. I wouldn't do any thing undelicate or premature, except between ourselves."

"To be sure not, Mr. Twigg; but our two speculations can't hurt any one's feelings while they're kept primitive to ourselves. There's no harm, I hope, in saying one prefers the Hall to the Hive?"

"I'll tell you what, madam, if the Hall comes to me in course of law, I shouldn't decline. But if not, a man of my property, says you, can do without it."

"It must be owned, Mr. T., as yet it's only hearsay about Mr. Walter Tyrrel's being lawfully unbegotten in wedlock. We've no one's words for it but our son's, that he heard the young Squire Ringwood call him a bastard. Not that the Hall as you say is exactly what one would wish. The drawing-room is too far removed from the servants: you'd never know what's going on in the kitchen."

"D—n it, madam, I tell you we ain't come in yet; but that's always your way, blab, blab, blab. Sir Mark ain't dead yet."

"No, but he's as good—and so as one don't shorten him, there's no harm in sayin' he'd live a while longer if he'd give more vent—but he sets in to it, and he'll be gone before the fall of the leaf. What's the she to Baronet, if you come into the title?"

This important question obtained no answer; not that Twigg was gone to sleep, for he was wide awake to his own interest and importance, but he happened to be absorbed in a double calculation of the chance of succeeding to the Justiceship, which Mr. Rivers wished to resign, and the expense of standing for the county,—an honour Sir Mark Tyrrel had always declined. His partner knew better than to disturb him at such moments by repetitions, and the rest of the ride passed in silence. The reader will easily conceive, from the foregoing dialogue, that the sympathy of the Twiggs with the sorrows of the day had not been without alleviation; indeed the

drift of some injudicious remarks and questions on the part of the lady, had been detected by the suspicious vigilance of St. Kitts. For instance, she condoled with him on the sad shock to his uncle, who could not possibly live over it,—and what a loss it would be to himself—especially as he was a sort of orphan: and then she made some very particular inquiries about his mother. She hoped in conclusion, his uncle would do something for him—she meant something certain, as nobody knew who might start up for the estates. She had heard a talk, she said, of buying him a commission in the army, and, as a friend, she'd advise him, under present precarious circumstances, to get it settled as soon as he could. It was very hard parents' sins should come upon their children —but so it was. The Creole winced under her words: a new thorn of no common magnitude was planted in his side, and added its pangs to that retributive accumulation of tormenting doubts and fears which inevitably attends on a course of crime.

The prognostic of Mrs. Twigg seemed too

likely to be verified. The health of Sir Mark rapidly declined, partly in consequence of his abandonment of all his accustomed field sports, nay, his daily rides even were discontinued. Such an extreme change in his habits would alone have seriously affected his constitution, if it had not been broken down by the access of violent grief and the subsequent preying of his mind upon itself, for he had suffered intensely though silently. The effect was that of premature old age; he lost his vigour and activity, his appetite and his sleep, symptoms beyond the power of medicine to remove, although, in compliance with his sister's wish, he placed himself under the care of Dr. Bellamy. But the wound was incurable, and he knew it, and he prepared himself to meet his end with a manly composure that belonged to his character. He considerately made all his worldly arrangements, which were marked by his usual benevolence and rectitude, and thenceforward his earthly thoughts rested chiefly on the Creole; to whom, as his heir and successor, he gave much excellent advice for his future guidance. In this mood he one day

desired the company of St. Kitts to the kennel, in order to bestow on him the fruits of his own experience as a master of hounds. But he had miscalculated his own strength; after turning the key he retreated from the door with a bewildered look.

"I cannot," he said, "I dare not—every hound that knows me knew *him*.—But mind what I say, look to 'em now and then with your own eyes—Dick is one of the trustiest, but we none of us perform the worse for being overlooked——"

"My dear uncle," said the Creole; "I hope the day is far, far distant, when they will want my inspection."

"No, Walter, no,"—said the Baronet; "I'm as good as run into—it's a sign I'm sinking, that my sorrows are so mute—I can't help talking in the style, but I've done with hounds and hunting altogether. One more halloo and you have heard my last."—

So saying he gave a and weak wavering cry, as different from his old jovial shout in the field, as the utterance of a ghost might be supposed in

comparison with the living voice—all his bodily energies were extinct.

"There," he said, "do you think hounds would be cheered by such a sound as that? My own dogs don't answer to it—except one—and do ye know which it was that opened?"

The Creole knew well, but he was silent.

"It was Deathbell, boy, old Deathbell," said the Baronet; "one of Warde's deep tolling breed. It's maybe a warning, but I don't flinch at it, he winds nothing more than I do myself. My head runs all one line, and that's to where all my hopes are gone to earth. If you would know where to have me, you must make a cast towards Tylney Church."

"My dearest uncle," said the Creole, "for the sake of those who survive, you ought not to despond. Time is a cure for all griefs, and the many years I hope you have yet to see——"

"One, will be enough for me," answered the Baronet, "and that is in its wane; I'm on my last legs. From this day forward, St. Kitts, look on the pack as your own, keep 'em up as a master

should, for the sake of the county and the old family name. Be pleasant to the farmers, and ware wheat; mind and preserve hospitality. You'll find a cellar well stocked. Be the old English gentleman, and that says every thing."

"This is too painful," said the Creole, "every word wrings my heart."

"Keep on all my servants," continued the Baronet, without attending to the other's exclamation; "don't part with one of them; they belong to a good old breed that, if I'm not mistaken, is wearing out. Not so showy and flourishing maybe, but staunch and steady to their work. Stand up for Church and King, and be kind to your aunt—poor Kate!

"Alas!" said the Creole, "this is dreadful, every word is a farewell."

"Above all," concluded the Baronet, and he gave every word a distinct emphasis; "remember, Raby was innocent. They say a man on the borders of the other world sees clearer than common, and that is my solemn view of it. Keep up the good name of the Tyrrels as well as the

estates, and never abide a blot upon the 'scutcheon, or a mortgage upon the land."

These were almost the last words of the good Baronet. The next morning he was found in his bed, stiff and cold, in an attitude that showed he had been towering towards heaven, as the wounded bird does, before he died. The marble hands were piously joined like those of a Christian knight on an old monument; and if death be but a sleep, according to Hamlet, implying good or evil dreams, to judge by the placid countenance, the departed spirit had rejoined its dearest objects in that happy world, where love is as vital an element as the atmosphere we breathe in this.

Thus fell the head of this devoted house; the last main obstacle that had interposed between the Creole and his guilty object. In some minds such a consummation would almost incur a denial, or at least a doubting, of Providence, looking at the inequality of the dispensation. But poetical justice is one of the merest fictions; and consists, as the term imports, rather with Utopian views than with the real rugged course of human life.

To place Virtue or Vice in one scale, and an adequate portion of Good or Evil, as reward and punishment in the other, may produce food meet for babes; but the picture has little reference to the true course of events in this variegated world, where the base and bad rejoice and revel daily in the high places, whilst excellence mourns in the dust. Honesty begs for bread, and knavery prospers, adding houses to houses, and land to land. The just suffer, whilst the unjust judge in ermine. Folly rules, and wisdom pines unheard. Vanity is caressed at the expense of genius,—and sanctimonious hypocrisy tramples on humble piety. The mortal balance indeed preponderates in favour of the wicked. It follows necessarily, that the unscrupulous man, who justifies all means by the end, and rejects neither fraud nor cruelty when they conduce to his purpose, must arrive more frequently, and by a shorter path, at his object, than the conscientious one who will not strain a principle or deviate one step from the line of rectitude. Thus wealth, power, and worldly honour, are apt to become the prizes of the crafty

and the violent, the corrupt and the depraved; the swindler, the perjurer, and the tamperer with blood. Hence such anomalous awards as the traitor's death to the patriot, the felon's imprisonment to the honest debtor, and persecution and poverty to a benefactor of mankind. The child, however, is taught by his copy-book that "Virtue is its own Reward," and every volume in his juvenile library not only inculcates the same principle, but holds out a direct promise of an equitable adjustment in this world, which is only to be looked for in another: an absurd system, by which, instead of being forearmed and forewarned by a practical prospect of the trials to come, the good boy grows up a good man, and is astonished and disgusted to find himself, instead of being even a silver-gilt Whittington, a contemned object, walking the world barefoot and penniless, with the reward of Virtue hanging upon his neck, in the likeness of one of those tin or pewter medals of merit that used to decorate him at his academy. This is an evil in our literature that demands correction: as our preparatory schooling

is chiefly derived from the writings and the teaching of the female sex, it would be well if the schoolmistress would go abroad with the schoolmaster, and pick up some principle of conduct for youth, superior to the servile, selfish one of the puppy, who is conscious of the breaker behind his heels, with a dog-whip in one hand, and a piece of liver in the other.

Events sometimes crowd so closely upon each other's heels, that the pen of the historian must adopt a similar pace. Briefly then, the tomb again yawned, and again it closed, having in one short month received three kindred corses, and the Creole found himself invested with the title of Baronet, and in possession of the vast estates of Tylney Hall. He did not enjoy this accession undisturbed. The Twiggs, as he had foreseen, came forward and disputed the validity of his claim; but a perusal of the will, and the marriage certificate of Colonel Tyrrel with Indiana Thurot, effectually dissipated the hopes of the Ex-Sheriff, who abruptly departed with his helpmate, venting execrations in the bitterness of their defeat on

the innocent mansion they had coveted, the lady loudly declaring, as she stepped from the threshold, that she would never—never—never set foot in its odious doors any more.

With something of a kindred resolution, Mrs. Hamilton left the Hall shortly after the funeral, with the ostensible purpose of residing for awhile at Hawksley, for the sake of the companionship of her adopted daughter, Grace Rivers, but in reality because she could not endure to remain an inmate of the house since it became the property of her nephew. His ill-disguised exultation had not escaped her notice; his dismissal of some of the oldest servants, contrary to his uncle's express injunction, excited her indignation; and the haughty bearing he suddenly assumed, in striking contrast to his adulation of herself, seemed to justify the personal antipathy she had preconceived towards him. She even began to entertain vague suspicions with which she hardly dared to trust herself, and the frankness of her nature would not allow her to profess affection where she felt dislike, or to pretend to confidence where she

entertained nothing but jealousy and mistrust. In spite therefore of the most urgent remonstrances and the warmest protestations from St. Kitts, who represented himself as one who would be totally bereaved by her absence, she persisted in her course, and the wheels of the Justice's carriage, as they rolled away with her, became wheels of torture to the Creole, or, as he must now be called, Sir Walter.

"There she goes, curse her," he mutter'd between his teeth, "to sow the seeds of her own infernal doubts and fancies in the mind of Grace: she hates me, I know she does, and my love in that quarter is as likely to thrive by her countenance as a peach under a north wall."

To the Scotchwoman, who accompanied her mistress, the change was equally desirable: educated in the serious and somewhat rigid religious principles of her country, she criticised with proportionate alarm the proceedings of the new master of the house, who had gradually imbibed some of the sceptical notions of his foster-mother. As men are apt in such cases, he sought to reconcile him-

self to his infraction of the divine laws, by disputing their authority. Accordingly, to the great horror of Tibbie, he discontinued the family devotions, in which, agreeable to old practice, Sir Mark and his domestics had met and mingled in their petitions and thanksgivings to the throne of grace; nor did Sir Walter, like his predecessor, attend punctually at the parish church on each sabbath, to join in the responses with sonorous emphasis, or receive the pastor's final benediction with a devout amen. In leaving such a house, the Scotchwoman conceived she was but opportunely flying from the wrath to come: from a roof that trembled over her head, walls that tottered round her, and chimneys that attracted the lightning of heaven. Others of the domestics adopted her views, though perhaps with more of temporal leaven, and gave warning. Amongst others, old Deborah, who, in spite of her age and her asthma, still breathed, if breathing it might be called, declared her determination of leaving a home where she had been born and bred. Like some

other great men, the Creole found that he had acquired power without popularity.

The Squire went a step, or rather a stride, beyond Mrs. Hamilton, in his disgust and his suspicions; he would have been displeased with an angel for filling the station which Ringwood ought to have occupied, but he had always regarded the Creole as in part a devil, and he now looked upon him, and loathed him, as a fiend incarnate. He hated, as he had loved, exclusively, "with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength." He would have hunted the wide world over for a rival heir, and he would have supported a plausible claim to the utmost extent of his purse; and in this object he was soon gratified. Some manuscript verses on the death of Ringwood had been privately circulated amongst the gentry of the neighbourhood; but whilst everybody admired the exquisite tenderness of the sentiment, the novelty and beauty of the imagery, and the fine Miltonic flow and harmony of the versification, few cared to inquire earnestly into the authorship. But it was

otherwise with Squire Ned; the subject rendered it to him the prize poem of all that had ever been written since Homer, and with that unwearied dogged pertinacity of purpose which distinguished him, he tasked himself to discover the writer, and by dint of sagacity and perseverance, he at last traced the production to that ragged troubadour "Tom in Tatters." The vagabond minstrel was immediately asked to the Cottage, an invitation which was several times declined; and it was only by a stratagem at last that the Squire obtained an interview with the eccentric poet. The latter, when taxed with the composition of the elegy, frankly admitted it, and confessed his gratification that it had proved so acceptable to the feelings of one whose devoted attachment to the subject of the lament was so universally acknowledged. Beyond this avowal, the Squire could obtain no information from his guest, whose superior manners and polished diction, nevertheless, evinced a marvellous discrepancy between his private character and his public habits. The tattered one, however, sedulously avoided any allusion to his

former life or his earlier pursuits; and it was only after several bottles of Madeira had been broached, and when the treacherous propensity to drink had betrayed the stranger beyond his self-command, that he entered upon his own history. He had been educated, he said, at the University, but some bacchanalian orgies with a party in low life, which he had entered into with a view to the study of human nature, had led to his disgraceful expulsion from college. It had, unfortunately, escaped his recollection that such classes were not comprised in the course of humanity prescribed by Alma Mater, who accordingly cast him from her bosom, branded as a reprobate son, that she rejected for ever. The tears streamed down his cheeks during this recital, but his sighs amounted almost to groans, as he described the progress of his subsequent degradation.

"And now here I am," he concluded; "I was ranked with beasts, and I have degenerated to suit their classification. I am as they described me, genus and species, a sot—a vagabond—an abject dependant—a disgrace to society—a burthen to

others and to myself. I dreamt once I was destined for better things; but the best I now hope is, at the first fine holiday the schoolboys will go shouting and capering after the pauper funeral of 'Tom in Tatters.'"

With these words the unfortunate student jumped hastily up, intending to make a precipitate retreat, but he happened to be in Ned's panoramic parlour, and he could not discover the door; he had no remedy, therefore, but to await the Squire's pleasure, who by his odd, yet honest and hearty, expressions of sympathy, at last prevailed upon the poor fellow to compose himself. They resumed their drinking, and towards midnight, in the warmth of his heart, the outcast communicated to his new friend, that he was a descendant of the old intimate of Ned, Sir Theophilus Tyrrel, who had been "cleaned out upon the turf." The announcement upset all the Squire's recent apathy towards the human race: he jumped up, and actually hugged his informant at some risk to his dilapidated garments; for, like the bereaved Macduff, he thought he had found the Malcolm under

whose banner he was to do vengeance on bloody Thane. The night was passed in questi and mutual deliberation, and the morning saw Squire, mounted upon Barney, on his way to Hall, in order to give Sir Walter the nuts to cr which he had gathered from the genealogical of "Tom in Tatters."

CHAPTER X.

" Come hither, boy, come hither to my arms;
Have I not plotted rarely? Nay, how's this!
You stare affrighted at the touch of joy,
As if it were the worst, extremest woe.
No word, no sound, no stir, not ev'n, alas!
A smile to tell me, 'Mother, I am glad. "

ROXANA.

If in this exile dark and drear
To which my fate has doom'd me now,
I should unnoticed die—what tear,
What tear of sympathy, will flow?
For I have sought an exile's woe,
And fashion'd my own misery:
Who then will pity me?

SPANISH ROMANCES.

AMONGST the many causes of disquietude which beset the mind of the new Baronet were two of peculiar interest and importance, namely, an unusual absence of his foster-mother, and the total silence of Woodley. In spite of his numerous rides and walks for the purpose, he had never been

able to meet with Marguerite since the interview which preceded the discovery of the drowned body of his kinsman, and her peremptory and repeated injunctions deterred him from availing himself of the secret of her lonely abode. She ought naturally to have come forward with her congratulations to him on the success of her predictions; and with his anxious temperament, to doubt was to fear, and every delay seemed a new danger. On the other hand, although the fate of Raby had become a certainty, he could not help wondering that his correspondent in St. James's Street had not written to inform him of the non-arrival of the intended victim. But the reason of the omission was furnished to him from an unexpected source.

As he sat at breakfast, carelessly glancing over the columns of a morning journal, his eye was suddenly attracted by the words, "Fatal duel—death of Peter Woodley, Esq.;" and a few following lines informed him, that the gentleman in question had been run through the body at a hostile meeting, which originated in a dispute at

dice. The paper dropped from his hand, and a cold shiver ran through his frame, as he learned the sudden cutting off of his companion in former villanies: without knowing why, he associated the catastrophe with a secret misgiving, that his own exit would be of a violent nature; and the presentiment to which the paragraph gave birth, from that hour never deserted him. He was still labouring under the agitation which the tragical news had excited, when the Squire was announced, and the personage who entered, and the unusual early hour of the visit, contributed to his discomposure. In fact, he stammered so in his welcome, that he felt compelled to apologise.

"I got up a little out of sorts," he said, "with my nerves unsettled; and they have just been still further disturbed by reading in the paper the fall of an old college chum in a duel."

"Woodley, eh!" said the Squire, who had perused the same journal; "serve him right;—got punished for cogging;—know the fellow that settled him."

"It's a deplorable case," said the Creole, "in all its bearings; but gambler, as I believe he was, one

must be shocked at his being called to his account so unexpectedly."

"Nobody doubts," answered the Squire. "When the devil dies he'll have a chief mourner."

"Mr. Somerville," answered the Creole, as calmly as he could, "I can allow for your known ascetic temper, or such an expression would excite my serious displeasure. But I have observed with regret a kind of personal pique towards me in particular, unconscious as I am of any intentional cause of offence, ever since the lamentable death of——"

"Hold hard!" exclaimed the Squire; "don't name him;—come to that by-and-bye!" and the speaker was evidently suppressing passions which might have prompted him to some act of violence. But he mastered the impulse, and commenced an address, contrary to his usual style, in a deep, deliberate tone, without clipping off the pronouns.

"You are now Sir Walter Tyrrel, and the landlord of half the parish. It was a great stake, and you stood upon a lucky horse when you backed the black one with a long tail and a head full of feathers. But perhaps you are not so fast in the

saddle as you think; and I have got a stiff fence or two for you to get over. A change may come. Here you are in high keep at rack and manger; but you may find yourself some day turned out to grass like Brown Bastard."

"I understand your last allusion, Sir," said the Creole, his lips quivering with passion, "and it points out to me the drift of your discourse. I presume the question of my legitimacy is to be again agitated?"

"Right—you've hit on it," answered the Squire; "so give tongue at once, and I'll hark to you."

"I should have thought," answered Sir Walter, "that the decision Mr. Twigg came to would have satisfied every one upon the point you have come, I must say unnecessarily, to discuss. I might reasonably urge the painful nature of the subject as an excuse for declining to enter into it afresh; but, in consideration of your standing as a friend of the family, I shall make no objection to your seeing the documents."

"Not I," answered the Squire hastily, and falling

into his old manner; "can't judge—out of my line —forgeries may be."

The Creole winced, for the words had struck upon one of his own misgivings; but he struggled to maintain his composure, and addressed the Squire with an air of lofty indifference.

"May I presume to ask, Sir, on whose behalf you are so much interested as to forget the ordinary rules of good manners?"

"Manners will mend," answered Ned sharply; "wish some matters could be mended too. Mayhap you have heard of Tom Tatters?"

A scornful laugh burst from Sir Walter at the idea of the ragged itinerant setting up as a candidate for the hereditary honours and possessions of the house of Tyrrel, and he received with a sneer of pity the paper that was tendered to him, whereon the Squire had traced with his own hand a sort of tree in illustration of the pedigree of his protegée. It was, however, made out with so much of the phraseology of the stud-book—Dam, Somebody; Grandam, Somebody else; by Such-a-one out of

So-and-so—that the Creole was some time in picking out its meaning.

"All plain enough," said Ned, jealous of the character of his performance; "don't want spelling over: first, old Theophilus; then two sons, Theodore and Timothy. Twigg comes from Timothy, and tattered Tom from Theodore, the eldest branch."

"I will grant you all your branches and Twiggs to boot," answered Sir Walter, coolly. "But now condescend to view the other side of the tree. Listen: Rupert was the elder brother of Theophilus. From Rupert, Mark; and my father was Sir Mark's only brother——"

"*There* pull up," said Ned. "Remember the bend sinister;—might be the wrong side of the blanket."

"That question, if you would be so rash as to moot it, must be tried at law," answered Sir Walter, contemptuously; and, with an insolent parade of his toothpick, he rose from the table and sauntered to the window.

The Squire's one eye glistened like a red-hot

coal. "Law, eh!" he said: "civil or criminal? or, mayhap, both at once?—Soon see. *Good bye to Sir Walter!*" he added significantly, as he reached the door, which, after a long withering frown, like that of Byron's Corsair, he closed behind him with a sudden slam.

The Creole, in spite of his affected indifference, was ill at ease: the determined inveterate character of the Squire assured him that the new claim, however preposterous and unfounded, would be brought forward, and prosecuted with all possible pertinacity, necessarily involving a heavy expense, and an infinite deal of personal trouble, annoyance, and mortification.

"That maimed paw is lucky for him," he muttered. "If he could hold a sword, I might try my skill at fence on him; and it could not be fleshed to better purpose. Bullets are out of the question: he's a candle-snuffer with the pistol in his left hand."

He was absorbed in a calculation of the probable steps that would be taken by the tattered candidate and his patron, and devising some scheme for

avoiding the public spectacle of so ridiculous a contest, when a servant presented a little billet to his hand, the thrilling contents of which instantly banished the recent occurrence from his thoughts. There were only two words in it; but those words were "Hennessey's Hut." His hand was at the bell-rope to order his horse, when he recollected that the hut referred to was situated in an intricate wood, of difficult access even on foot. Unluckily it lay between the Hall and Hollington; and, in spite of his intense impatience, he was compelled to delay his departure, for fear of being observed and followed by the suspicious Squire, whose road lay in the same direction. As soon as prudence allowed, he set out, at the pace of a pedestrian in training for a match against time; and, in a comparatively short space, he found himself on the verge of the dense wood which enveloped his foster-mother's retreat. Nobody but a man impelled by as strong a motive, or an ardent sportsman, would have straggled far into such a wilderness;—path there was little or none; it had been so overgrown by briars—so interlaced, that the passage

was slow and painful. In some places the trees arched overhead, to an almost utter exclusion of the light of day; in others they started asunder, and suffered the sunbeam to visit the damp earth, that smelt noisomely of the rotting or rotted leaves of past seasons. The Creole's hands were filled with thorns, from eagerly tearing asunder the obstacles to his progress; and he was dabbled up to the waist by the wet underwood through which he rushed, while the features of the place became more savage and dreary as he approached the dwelling supposed to be haunted by the spirit of the murdered keeper. Several times the disturbed adder darted across the path, and the iron tolling of the raven broke harshly and ominously upon the silence. The trees increased in size, and wreathed fantastically in more distorted attitudes, whilst the huge gnarled roots protruded here and there from the soil, like the bones of antediluvian monsters. No other woman than Marguerite could have selected such a dreary spot for her residence; indeed it seemed to require more than masculine nerve and courage to contend with all its horrors, natural

and superstitious. The hut stood in a small open plot, near the centre of the wood; it was a sort of log-house, like those in the back settlements of North America, and had been constructed at the whim of a fanciful recluse, named Hennessey, who however made up his quarrel with the world after a year's residence. It then became the abode of the unfortunate keeper, whose violent death, but for Marguerite's resolution, would have left it untenanted for ever. It consisted of two rooms, which were divided by a partition of lath and clay, whereon the stain of blood was still visible. The outer door had been shivered by the ruffians who perpetrated the savage deed, and had never been replaced, so that the Creole stepped into the house without knocking. The voice of Marguerite saluted him immediately from the inner chamber, desiring him to sit down on the chest till she had completed her dressing. The prescribed seat was a sort of large sea chest, and was the only furniture of the room, except an old hogshead, which served for a table. On the top of this convenience, however, stood a teapot,

and cup and saucer of antique China, which to a virtuoso in that brittle ware would have been inestimable; a solitary silver spoon lay beside the teapot, but it was of the most massive form and the richest workmanship. These were the only objects in the room, and the Creole had leisure to gaze and wonder at them till he was weary. It seemed as if his wayward foster-mother intended to make a trial of his patience. To add to his disquiet, he fancied that his ear detected a whisper in the adjoining room; and, however unlikely the supposition that Marguerite could have a companion, it seemed to make every minute an age till she appeared. At last, when his temper was on the point of giving way, the door of the inner chamber suddenly opened, and a figure presented itself that fixed him breathless to his seat.

It was Marguerite—not in the squalid attire of the wandering queen of the gipsies, but in the rich splendid costume of an oriental princess.

She wore a short robe of carnation satin, descending nearly to the knee, where it finished with a rich gold fringe. Underneath this tunic

was a white satin petticoat, elegantly embroidered; full trowsers of the same material were fastened close above the ankle so as to set off its symmetry, and her slippers in colour matched her tunic. Her waist was circled by a broad zone, fastened in front by a diamond clasp, and the flowing sleeves of the robe were looped up at mid-arm by clusters of the same jewels. The under sleeves, of a gossamer texture, were confined at the wrist by massive bracelets of pure gold, and every taper finger of her well-formed hand glittered with one or more jewelled rings. On her head she wore a turban of a singular but becoming form, the material of which it was composed being one of those Indian many-coloured shawls which are always so picturesque. The bosom was covered, but not concealed, by the same delicate muslin as the under-sleeves, and her throat was encircled by a collar of gold to match the bracelets. Altogether it was apparently the costume of no particular nation, but a fancy dress adopted at the suggestion of her own taste.

She smiled at witnessing the astonishment of

the Creole, and for awhile enjoyed his admiration in silence.

"Well, Sir Walter," she said at last, in a tone of suppressed triumph, "what do you think of me?"

"I have seldom seen anything," answered the Creole, with his eyes fixed like a man talking in his sleep—"no, I have never seen anything so rich and tasteful."

"I asked the question, Sir Walter," she said, "chiefly with reference to my poor self;" and she remained standing before him in an attitude well chosen for the display of a still graceful figure.

The Creole was a warm admirer of beauty, and although years and exposure, and perhaps sorrow, had taken off the lustre of her charms, they had not much quenched the brilliancy of Marguerite's jet black eyes, nor destroyed the fine contour of her countenance. Neither had her shape so lost its symmetry but that the eye could still recognise the original excellence of the mould. Enough remained both of form and face to prove that at one time she must have been amongst the most

lovely and fascinating of her sex. He answered her in an animated tone,

"I think it is a pity Time did not stand still when he had such an object to gaze upon."

She was charmed with this flattering reply, which addressed itself to her weakest point; her eyes glistened, and exclaiming that she had forgotten to congratulate him on his new title, she advanced hastily and clasped him in a fond embrace. She held him in her arms so long and so closely, that it required almost a struggle on the part of the Creole to free himself, and get upon his feet. He then offered her the vacant seat, but she motioned to him to sit down again, while from the inner room she fetched a rude chair, in which she placed herself full in front of her foster-son.

"And now, Marguerite," inquired the latter, "will you inform me of the purport of this Sultana presence, at which I still stare and wonder as if I were dreaming with my eyes open, like Abon Hassan in the Arabian Nights?"

"What does it mean," answered Marguerite,

with a smile, "but that I am going to resume my station in society? Such as you see me now, except that I was younger and more blooming, I was once every day of the week. Sir Walter Tyrrel has never invited me, but I am going back with him to the Hall that is now his own!"

"To the Hall!" echoed the Creole.

"Yes, to the Hall," answered Marguerite, "where should a mother seek her home but in the house of her son?"

"Of her son," repeated the Creole.

"Of her son," reiterated Marguerite. "Oh Walter! what heart but a mother's could have gone through what mine has for your sake? But compose yourself, Walter, compose yourself as I do, for I am afraid of my own happiness."

The Creole made no reply. He gasped for breath, and would have recoiled but for the wall at his back, to which he seemed fixed as motionless as a figure upon a frieze. He was stunned and petrified by the blow.

"Walter, dearest Walter, speak to me," exclaimed the woman, in a voice of alarm, at the

e time taking his hand. "The foster-mother all a fable; it's your own parent stands before —Indiana herself."

'Away, woman! away!" cried the Creole, cely, freeing his hand and starting to his feet he same moment. "So then I am a dupe at ; oh! had I foreseen this," and clasping his ds above his head, he paced rapidly to and fro oss the narrow room with the frantic demean- of a maniac.

'Walter Tyrrel, listen to me I beg you—I eech you—I implore you," exclaimed the wo- n, at each adjuration raising her voice till it ame a scream, and at the same time clinging him by the neck, the arms, or even the knees. t he continually swung himself out of her sp, and as a last resource she left his violence exhaust itself, planting herself in the meanwhile the entry, with each hand grasping the door- t, to prevent his retreat.

As she anticipated, his frenzy gradually de- ased, but it was only to subside into a more rible calmness. He stopped suddenly, with his

face close to hers, so that their eyes looked searchingly into each other, whilst the voice he addressed her with scarcely rose above a whisper.

"She-devil that you are, did you wind me in your hellish toils but for this—to make me the pitiful tool of your own ambition?"

The eyes of Marguerite flashed angrily, but she restrained her passion.

"Walter," she said, "we will talk when you are calmer—but take one warning, do not miscall me—use no evil word that shall make you ready hereafter to pluck out your own tongue by the roots."

"Come and talk on then," said the Creole, sullenly retreating and throwing himself again upon the chest, whilst the woman re-occupied the chair. They watched each other for some minutes in silence, which Marguerite was the first to break.

"Walter, the hour is come that must seal my happiness or misery—the hour to which I have looked forward through long years of scorn and sorrow. Oh Walter, never did woman's heart

beat so thickly even at a love tale as mine, when the sound of your foot entered this hut; it said to me—'Indiana, there comes your son, the child you have pressed in many an unrequited embrace, but who will now return you love for love.' If I had any ambition it came last, when I whispered to myself, 'and that son is Sir Walter Tyrrel.'"

"Say rather," answered the Creole, haughtily, "that when I became what I am, Marguerite envied Indiana. It is well performed, but I have sat before at a play in a barn, where a stroller, a vagrant Jewess may be, has personated the Queen of Egypt."

"But she had not Cleopatra's own jewels," answered the woman, glancing at her hands, which glittered with many-coloured gems. "Nor did she wear Antony's picture in her bosom"—and she drew forth the miniature of the Creole's father, and held it up before his eyes.

"A waiting woman has purloined as much before now," answered the latter, with a sneer.

"As for that picture, I here claim it as my own, by right."

"Claim it as my son," answered the woman, "and it is yours. The child must take the mother with the father—reject me, Walter, and you reject him."

"I must have better proof," said the Creole, smiling scornfully, "before I adopt such a motley parentage. For my own part, I believe in the force of blood: if your story were true, there would have been some hereditary outbreak before this, but I have never taken yet to gipsy wanderings, to tell fortunes, or to rob hen-roosts."

"You forget my warning," said the woman, sharply; "if I have been a wanderer and reputed gipsy, it was for your own sake. Talk not of force of blood—water even draws to water, but if your heart does not yearn towards mine, it has no blood in its arteries: the first time I saw Walter Tyrrel, mine drew to him as the loadstone. If cold iron can attract iron, what must be the warm impulse of kindred flesh and blood?"

"Since you choose to appeal to natural philosophy," said Sir Walter, sarcastically, "I must remind you that such attraction is reciprocal. The iron leaps to the magnet, as the magnet is impelled towards the iron; but was that the case at our first interview? The attractive impulse was all your own; to me, if you remember, the sensation was repulsive."

"True,—oh true!" exclaimed the woman, pressing her hands upon her eyes, as if to shut out the scene he had conjured up, of maternal yearnings, and their bitter disappointment. "But the failure, Walter, was yours, and not mine. Yes, it is I who ought to reject, who ought to disclaim, who ought to disown a being so unlike myself, for with all her faults, poor Indiana could love, cruelly as it seems doomed to be requited by both father and son! Oh Walter, dearest Walter, in pity to my past pangs, spare me my present ones;" and in spite of herself, her wild black eyes were quenched in a gush of tears.

"I am sorry Marguerite," said Sir Walter, in a gentler tone, "that my allusion to the past

has given you so much pain; but forget our first meeting. I have since learned to estimate the tried fidelity and affectionate devotion of my foster-mother."

"Aye, there lies the stumbling-block," said Marguerite, as if speaking to herself. "But there were reasons, weighty reasons, which events have justified, for my remaining unknown, though it was a sore trial, and self-denial. Many times, in spite of prudence, my bosom has panted with the secret, almost to bursting; many times has the dear name been upon my tongue, that I now dare to call you by—my son, my own son!"

"Marguerite, if you would have me attend to your warning," said the Creole, relapsing into his severity, "I would recommend you to drop that title, and not press upon me what is a palpable after-thought. Granting you to have been my parent, a secresy so essential to my welfare as you represent, might have been safely intrusted to my own keeping."

"Suppose then another motive," answered the woman. "When Walter Tyrrel was torn from

these arms he was a mere infant, he could not even lisp my name. When I found him again, years had converted him into a boy, but he knew not his mother's face—he knew not her voice; he spurned her, as well he might, in the garb of a vagrant, for if his young memory could recal a trace of her, it must have been as something similar to what is now before him. Was it a crime then, Walter, that before she demanded the title, she wished to display the affection of a mother?—that before she claimed the love of her child, she endeavoured to earn it?"

"As a foster-mother," said Sir Walter quietly.

"A hireling,—a mercenary!" exclaimed the woman. "Her functions only begin, when the pre-eminent ones of a mother have come to an end! Where are her throes, her pangs, her painful pleasure and her pleasant pain, that link her for ever to her offspring through bliss or woe? No, Walter, none but a parent could have endured what I have gone through for your sake. Have I not watched for hours in piercing wind and drenching rain, only for a glimpse of you, to

hear the sound of your voice? Have I not hovered about you like a spirit, to guard you from harm? and toiled like a slave, till my toil became refreshing, because it was for your welfare? Have I not even, to be near you, discarded the character of woman, and chosen these blood-stained walls,"—she pointed to the partition,—"for my abode?"

"Enough of this," answered Sir Walter petulantly. "I am not so inclined to underrate your services, that they need thus to be set forth. Any thing in reason you may command—in return for the interest you have been pleased to take in my fortunes."

"Listen then," returned Marguerite, "since we are to treat on the footing of a common bargain; the reward I ask is small—a few syllables pronounced by the breath I gave you. Only acknowledge me as your mother, and I will cancel every other debt. I will forget that through me you are Sir Walter Tyrrel—that by my counsel you are not marching,—perhaps bleaching, on the burning sands of Egypt. I will forget even that I have been wronged and cast off; though I

have been your associate," she added wildly, "in plans that to disclose, would consign you to the gibbet!"

"I defy your threat," retorted Sir Walter, secretly alarmed, however, by such an intimation from one, who was capable of any extravagance in her fits of violence, even to the denunciation of herself. "Whatever *might* be schemed, the event that has taken place, was by course of nature. But you are mad, Marguerite, you are mad—at least upon one subject; and I should be mad too, to accept your self-delusions in proof of such a visionary relationship."

"I may be mad," answered Marguerite. "I have enough to make me so; but there are others who are sane. So surely as you are the son of Herbert Tyrrel, am I your mother: it would be better if uncalled for, but there is evidence in the neighbourhood to the fact. Ask Pompey, the black footman at the Hive, who, in this dress, would recognise his former mistress at a glance."

The Creole was confounded; the passionate earnestness of Marguerite, her valuable ornaments,

his father's picture, and above all, the appeal to Pompey's evidence, conspired to convince him that there was some foundation for her claim. But his heart had become callous, and instead of viewing such a tie as an acquisition, he regarded it as one that would embarrass him; however valuable as an auxiliary, as a mother Marguerite would be but a tormenting encumbrance, perpetually interfering according to her dictatorial character with his purposed independence. And he anticipated the popular ridicule that would attach to him from such a parentage as the Queen of the Gipsies. Marguerite meanwhile fixed her dark eyes upon his face, as if to penetrate his thoughts, and the words with which she interrupted his reverie proved that she interpreted them correctly.

"Walter, I guess your scruples. You apprehend that her vagrant Majesty will never be recognised as the Queen Dowager of Tylney Hall. But you know not the world as I do. Call me the mother of the wealthy Sir Walter Tyrrel, place me in this costume in your drawing-room,

and you shall see a dozen contend at once, who shall place the cushion beneath my feet! seat me thus upon a sofa, and you shall see a score languishing for the sign of my finger that invites the favoured one to my side." An appropriate motion of the hand accompanied the last sentence, and the sparkling eye, and flushing cheek of the speaker, betrayed that the picture of the future was but a reflection of past triumphs.

"Never," said the Creole, speaking as much to himself as his companion, "Never: it might do in St. Christopher's, but not here; a vagrant,—a gaol-bird, marked with stripes even——"

His auditor started to her feet like a storm personified: her brows loured, her eyes lightened, and her voice thundered. "Dare not, Walter Tyrrel," she cried, "dare not to degrade your own mother. Such words as you have used should sear your lips! Down on your knee,—down, and beg my pardon. Let the whole world beside fail me in respect, but I will have yours!"

"Peace, woman, peace," cried the Creole, with equal vehemence, and likewise rising from his

seat. "But mad, or not mad, there is no one here to heed your ravings. Now hearken yourself. Mother of mine, or mother not mine, makes no difference. Granting you to be what you allege, my father did not separate himself from you without some good reason of his own; and I mean dutifully to walk in his steps; but out of respect to *him*, I will consent to allow you a decent competence; but it must be on one condition,—that you return to the Western Islands, and place the Atlantic between me and yourself."

So saying, he made a movement to leave the hut, but Marguerite anticipated his intention, and resumed her old position in the doorway, "You pass not here," she cried, "except over my body, till I am recognised."

"I have named my terms," answered the Creole, deliberately folding his arms, in token of his determination. "If I call you mother, it must be when you are in St. Kitts."

A sharp shrill cry burst from Marguerite, it sounded like a trumpet note of retreat from a field of battle, where she had lost her all. But she

fought as she fled. "Wretch!" she cried, "cold blooded wretch, unworthy of father or of mother—but the curse shall return upon you, no issue shall ever spring from your loins! No offspring shall ever endear your hearth, no child shall ever draw you to your home. You shall walk through the world as lonely and as desolate as I am, without a living creature to love you, or a being to love!"

"More gipsy-work," said Sir Walter, carelessly. "Tell me the rest of my fortune, and I will cross your hand with a crown. But this is child's play. You have real claims upon me, Marguerite, without setting up sentimental ones. I care not who bore me, so that I was born in wedlock; a point certain parties are inclined to dispute. May I depend upon the papers you gave me?"

"Trust to nothing," answered a stifled voice, and as the Creole looked at the speaker, he saw her leaning her head upon her hands against the door-post, whilst her body heaved as with convulsive spasms. Before he could get to her she was down; and she waved him from her with her arms

at every attempt to raise her up again, whilst the blood flowed from her mouth so as to prevent her utterance. But her dark eyes spoke volumes as she fixed them upon the face of the Creole; they were full of reproach and resentment. Once or twice she tried to speak, but the effort caused the vital fluid to gush more violently; and with a mournful shake of the head, and a despairing motion of her hands, she intimated that hope was at an end. A cold dew started upon her forehead, her chest panted more violently, and, after a frightful struggle, she died choked with her own blood.

Such was the fate of Indiana Thurot, for it was that wretched woman herself who lay weltering at the feet of her unnatural son. Endowed by nature with extreme beauty and strong passions, which parental dotage had indulged, till she knew no law but her own ungovernable self-will, from the pampered spoilt girl, she grew into the capricious imperious woman, whose merest whim, however extravagant, was sedulously gratified by one or other of the admirers who made her the object of their flattering idolatry. From amongst these she

had selected Colonel Tyrrel as most worthy of her favour; he was handsome, elegant, and accomplished, and entertained an ardent affection, which she as fervently returned. A liaison ensued, of which the Creole was the fruit; but shortly after his birth, her impetuous temper began to show itself in the shape of the most frantic jealousy, whilst her tyrannical disposition prompted her to the greatest cruelties in the treatment of her slaves. At length, in an unbridled fit of passion, she inflicted the wound which shortened the days of the Colonel; after which she fled, it was believed, to take refuge with a former paramour, with whom she proceeded to England, where her companion shortly deserted her. In the course of the next twelve years she had formed two or three short-lived connections with persons of wealth and consequence, whom her fascinations had enthralled, but her original violence and lavish expenditure invariably dissolved every fresh tie; and even in the most prosperous seasons of such attachments, her heart reverted with regret and bitterness to the past. In such a frame of mind she learned the

arrival of Colonel Tyrrel in England with his son, and she immediately determined to throw herself in his way and sue for a reconciliation, but his speedy death defeated her project. All her affections then concentred in the young Walter; and the mode in which this engrossing feeling developed itself has been already told. A love of the mysterious and the romantic, a peculiar fondness for intrigue even in the smallest matters, and her habits of uncontrolled liberty, impelled her to the strange unsettled mode of life she had chosen to adopt. At first, her schemes for the aggrandisement of Sir Walter was unmixed with any other object, but by degrees she joined with it a hankering to resume that splendour and sway which she had formerly enjoyed. Hence her catastrophe. She died as she had lived, a victim to her own unrestrained passions; and the same hour that saw her decked in the gorgeous attire of former days, beheld her stretched on the ground a livid corpse; a spectacle the more appalling, as the lifeless flesh lay glittering in all the "pomp, pride, and circumstance," of its earthly vanities.

The shock to Sir Walter's feelings was not so great as to stun his prudence or deaden his cupidity. After a brief epitaph over the body, he proceeded carefully to ransack the adjoining apartment, which he found scantily furnished, yet exhibiting one more token of the character of the deceased. The bed was sordidly mean, but her toilet was perfect in its appointments, some of which were particularly costly. His strictest search was for papers whereby he might have been compromised, but he found merely one small packet, though its contents confirmed his worst misgivings; they were rough drafts of the letters and the certificate which Marguerite had given to him, all in the same hand, and with such erasures, additions, and interlineations, and even marginal remarks, as to leave no doubt of their being the originals of concerted forgeries. A discovery so fatal to his peace steeled his heart, and drew from him a bitter imprecation on the author.

"She might well say trust to nothing," he muttered. "Some day, had she lived, in one of her

fury fits at my declining to gratify her preposterous demands, she would have turned my arms against me, and challenged her own precious fabrications."

So saying, with the coolness of a savage Indian rifling a slain enemy, he took the jewels from her person, drew the gemmed rings from her fingers, and transferred his father's miniature to his own bosom. He then left the hut, and returned to the Hall, leaving the remains of Indiana, the once paramount idolised beauty of St. Christopher's, to be discovered by chance or to moulder where they lay—the latter fate being the most probable, considering the haunted character of the place.

CHAPTER XI.

" Learning is your only having!
Why then he has the best of ownerships,
Can winds and angry billows wreck his learning?
Can thieves and midnight robbers steal his learning?
Can rot and mildew perish all his learning?
Can learning be consumed by fire, or locked
For ages in the limbo of the law?
Is learning in the stocks? Can it be spent
By prodigals? Can learning ever lose
Its master like a dog? Pray be content,
Learning is surest of the gifts we have!"

TOWNE AND GOWNE.

TIME rolled on; six months passed away, and Sir Walter experienced no new inquietude. The ghost of the haunted hut still had the body of Indiana in its keeping; and the Squire had found more difficulty than he had anticipated in proving the identity and descent of his protegé. The only person who could have supplied any information

was Twigg; but the ex-sheriff resolutely set his face against the claim, and refused to acknowledge any relationship with a tatterdemallion who could not bring a good character for industry and application, to say nothing of sobriety, from his last place. Ned had felt the propriety of introducing the cousins to each other, and accordingly he took Tom with him to the Hive, clad in a new suit of mourning, and looking quite a gentleman, without any trace of his recent reckless habit, save a rather rubicund complexion, which after all only made him look like the incumbent of a fat living. The Squire never stood upon etiquette, and the visit he paid was so early that he arrived when the family were seated at breakfast.

"Mercy on us! Mr. Squire," said Mrs. Twigg, "here's an early visit."

"Friends can't meet too soon," answered the Squire; and then turning to the master of the house, he added, "brought a new cousin—one you never saw before; been a little under a cloud, but by and bye will be as bright as any of us."

"He is very welcome to the Hive," answered

Twigg; "I am not a man to disown flesh and blood, because of a low beginning. I don't care who knows it, but, as shiny as I am now, I rose in a fog myself. Pray what is the gentleman's name?"

"Sir Thomas Tyrrel, if all had their rights," answered Ned; "son of old Theodore—grandsire, Theophilus."

"I believe my uncle Theodore did have a son," answered Twigg, his countenance decidedly lengthening; "but he was a reprobate that never pushed on in life. If he'd fagged at his business early and late, as I did, he'd have been a doctor of divinity."

The unfortunate student hung his head.

"Sad job, sure enough," said the Squire; "got in a bit of a spree, and old Hilary kicked him out—very severe at Oxford;—old Hilary, above all!"

"Youth will be frolicsome," said Mrs. Twigg; "there's T. junior torments our lives out. What he'd do at college, Heaven knows! but I'm afraid he'd get into scrapes till he was scraped out too."

"Oxford be hanged," said the citizen, "he must rise to London dignities, as his father did before

him. The less learning says you, the more credit for cutting figures."

"Right," said Ned, with a knowing wink, "wouldn't train at Epsom to run at York. But let alone T. junior; come to Tom here—Tom in Tatters."

"Tom in whats?" ejaculated Mrs. Twigg.

"Tatters," answered Ned; "strange cousin of yours, Mr. Twigg—just turned up, like a new potato."

"What! us own to *him*," said Mrs. Twigg, turning up her hands and eyes with horror; "Mr. Squire, I do wonder at you, when we've every thing respectable about us, to bring such riff-raff into the house. Every body knows him, though you have smarted him up; he's tag-rag and bobtail at bottom! Why he's the hullabaloo of the whole parish!"

"Hold your fool's tongue, madam," said Twigg; "Mr. Squire can't mean to introduce to us a character that's of no use to society except to cast a slur upon people of property."

"Do intend, though!" said Ned. "Tom, speak up for yourself."

"There is no one here," said the student, "who could sympathise with what I should have to say."

"No matter—" said Ned, "do it for you. 'Here I am—been drunk now and then—who has not?—was rather rough in the coat from bad keep—'"

"Rough in the coat," exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, "a regular scarecrow!"

"Never mind Mrs. Twigg," said her husband, addressing the stranger; "she rhodomontades. Take my advice, whoever you are; begin the world again. Go up to London with a shilling in your pocket, and make your fortune. You've had a clerical education: go round to all the churches, and don't be too high for anything, no matter how low it is; that was my principle—commence humble. I once begun as a beadle, says you; but I leave off a bishop, with my share of church property."

"As for us," said Mrs. Twigg, "we couldn't afford to do anything for you if you *was* a relation. Every thing's dear: meat is unconscionable. What

with one thing and t'other, I must say our expenses always premeditate our income."

"Not but if industry and perseverance met their reward," said Twigg, "I should be ready to assist any frugal individual. A man that has obtained his property by such means deserves our commiseration."

"Thank ye when it comes," said Squire Ned; "not a bad way of making up a book—backing a horse when his tail's past the winning post. Won't take to Tom, then?"

"Why don't Mr. Thomas take to himself," said Mrs. Twigg. "I'm sure that's christianity—'every man for himself, and God for us all.' Nobody feels that more than we do."

"That's sense for once," said Twigg. "We are certainly very prosperous; God has been for us, and, says you, so have we been for God. Since we've lived at the Hive, we've never missed a Sunday at church."

"And that's more than the Pembertons can say," remarked Mrs. Twigg; "they skip all the

wet Sundays because of the horses' coughs and the servants' liveries."

"Church, eh?" said Ned; "you're high church, and that's the weathercock—turn with every wind that blows. Come along, Tom! 'Charity begins at home;' but can't find her—got the wrong address."

So saying, like the practical good Samaritan, the Squire led his protegé back to the Cottage, where he took him in to bed, board, and lodging, on terms, cards of which are to be had only of those who keep open house. The Levite and his wife, in the meantime, excused themselves by a reflection which the latter put into words. "It was impossible," she said, "to feel anything for anybody what was nothing to nobody."

The Squire was disconcerted, but not discouraged, by the result of this visit; he sent out an agent to St. Christopher's to obtain information concerning the marriage of Colonel Tyrrel, and the birth of the Creole, whilst he set to work himself to hunt out evidence in support of the claim of his client. This was a task of some difficulty, owing to the irregular conduct of Tom,

who in his degradation had purposely destroyed and sunk all traces of his original station. Thus nothing more was heard of the matter for some time, and the new Baronet began to flatter himself that the question was at rest; but although Ned was mute, he was picking out the scent with his usual sagacity and perseverance.

In the meantime, as Sir Walter had foreseen, his attachment to Grace Rivers seemed likely to be nullified by the death of its object. Every time he saw her, and he paid frequent visits at Hawksley, ostensibly on account of his aunt, she appeared more faded and wasted; and as he had augured of Mrs. Hamilton's companionship, he found himself looked upon, not merely with indifference, but dislike. Grace evidently shunned him; whenever she could with propriety withdraw she left him to the company of his aunt, and when she remained, his attempts to draw her into conversation were foiled by cold and laconic answers. Sometimes she replied to him even with a tone of asperity, and her few words conveyed, or at least were capable of being converted into some bitter

reproach. He had sounded the Justice, and had reason to believe that his pretensions would be favourably received by the father, however the offer of his person and fortune might be treated by the daughter, and he resolved to bring the question to an issue. Chance at last afforded him an opportunity. She was sitting alone one day in the drawing-room, when Sir Walter Tyrrel was announced, and before she had time to frame any excuse, he entered the apartment. The moment was propitious; after a few compliments, and general remarks, to which she replied as briefly as usual, he suddenly assumed a great earnestness of manner, and asked her if "he was always to be so unfortunate as to labour under the displeasure of Miss Rivers?"

"I am not aware," said Grace, "of any expression of mine that could indicate such a feeling."

"I am happy to believe then," answered the Creole, "that I have been mistaken, and that your words did not intentionally meditate such wounds as they have inflicted. I have been grieved to the heart sometimes, to fancy that I suffered in the

opinion of one whose favour I value above that of the whole world besides."

"Sir Walter Tyrrel can have little need of my poor opinion," answered Grace, coldly. "He will find plenty to think well of him now he is the favourite of fortune."

"A painful pre-eminence," he said, "and too dearly purchased to afford me any pleasure. Fortune has indeed favoured me far beyond my deserts in a worldly sense; but when I place my bereavements against it in the balance, I feel, alas, that I have lost far more than I have gained. With this regret I am sure my dear Miss Rivers will sympathise. How proud and happy should I be if we had all other sentiments in common."

"That is impossible," answered Grace, hastily.

"Say not so, my dear Miss Rivers," exclaimed the Creole ardently; "why should not love meet with love, as grief mingles with grief? Why should not sighs of passion encounter fellow sighs, as well as tear with tear in heartfelt communion? Why should not this white hand tremble to mine——"

"No more of this, I beg," said Grace, disengaging her hand which the Creole had grasped.

"I must—forgive me, dearest Miss Rivers," said Sir Walter, "but while this heart beats with love, my tongue must speak in unison. Mingle some pity for the living with your regret for the dead. Waste not in unavailing sorrow that lovely form——"

"And waste not these flatteries," interrupted Grace, hastily, "on ears to which they are unwelcome." So saying she rose up, and was about to leave the room, but Sir Walter detained her.

"Do not, do not go," he said; "if it must be my last, at least grant me a longer audience; at least suffer me to lay my life and fortune at your feet, though they should be doomed to rejection. Allow me at least to show that I am not blind to such perfection, but that I love—I adore——"

"Sir Walter," said Grace, angrily, "let me pass."

"Not till you have bid me hope," said Sir Walter, sinking on one knee; "place it as distant as you will, even like a star set in the farthest

heaven, so that I may look forward without despair."

"I have no hope to give or to receive," answered Grace. "Respect my misery, and spare this mockery of a broken heart."

"Give it to my keeping, dear Grace," replied the Creole, smiling, "and I will answer for the cure. Sorrow is not immortal; and as for a broken heart, it is, I assure you, a mere poetical trope."

"Enough," answered Grace, indignantly, "I will hear no more."

"One word—another word," exclaimed Sir Walter, detaining her by her dress, "say that you do not hate me, and I shall still have hope to live upon."

"Then despair," answered Grace. "As I hate all that is base, cruel, and treacherous, I hate Sir Walter Tyrrel;" and bursting into tears, she broke from him and hurried out of the room.

The Creole was petrified. Her voice, like that of the accusing angel, had struck upon his guilty soul. So harsh a sentence from so gentle a being

gave the words a tenfold force, and he shrank and shuddered as if all his secret villanies had just been laid bare to the gaze of the whole world. But this transient feeling of remorse soon passed away, and more angry passions usurped its place.

"There spoke my malignant aunt," he said; "the infernal words were hers, though put into Grace's mouth."

In this irritable mood he snatched up his hat, and, without waiting to see Mrs. Hamilton, he abruptly quitted the house.

He was destined to another annoyance, though of a more petty character. As he flung himself sullenly on his horse, the animal, from some ruffle in his temper, began to back and turn round, a whim so trying to the impatient humour of Sir Walter, that he plied the spur, the whip, and the bit, without mercy; and the horse resenting this treatment, a struggle ensued for the mastery, in which the rider literally came off with the worst. After several plunges, and rearing and kicking, by a sudden jerk the brute contrived to throw the Creole over his head, to the infinite

mortification of the latter, who heard a horse-laugh at his expense. He was in the saddle again in a twinkling, and cramming the spurs into the flanks of his steed, he departed at full gallop; but at the end of the first hundred yards, he was nearly unseated again by the horse shying at some object in the road, which he refused to pass. Indeed it looked more like a bundle of rags than a human being, that sat, or rather crouched, on the ground at the side of the narrow lane; and the snorting animal was only induced by dint of much alternate coaxing and compulsion to approach within a yard or two of the figure, where he stood wildly eyeing it, and panting with terror. Sir Walter, however, was bent upon his point, and at last he succeeded in bringing his horse so close, as almost to trample on the man, and then reining him up, he suffered the wayward brute to gaze away his alarm. The poor wretch, in the mean-time, turned up his face imploringly; it was pinched with cold and hunger, and of the colour of saffron, and his hand shook like an ague as he held out a tattered straw hat.

"For the love of God, bestow a ha'penny on a poor unfortunate fellow!"

"I'll bestow a broken head on you, scoundrel!" cried the vexed Sir Walter; and he aimed a blow at the object with the butt-end of his whip.

"The old thing!" exclaimed the mendicant, in a tone of piteous resignation: "more kicks than ha'pence. But that's my luck!"

The spurs were dashed in the horse's side; he darted past the beggar, and flew off with the speed of the whirlwind: but a new trouble was in store for the ill-used wretch. A tall, ungainly, heavy-looking man came striding up to him, and inquired, in a tone of authority, what had passed with the gentleman on horseback.

"I only asked him for a trifle to keep soul and body together," said the man in rags, "and he gave me this cut on the head. It has fetched blood; but I won't complain. It's what I'm used to,—only I'd take it kind if he'd made it wilful murder at once."

"Then you was begging," said the constable, with a wink and a nod, for it was Master Goff him-

self. "Let me alone for finding out vagrancy. I knew I'd pump it out of ye. You must come along with me."

"What for begging a ha'penny?" asked the object.

"Yes, or for half a farden," answered the constable. "It's the positive orders of his worship, Justice Rivers, and I'm especial particular round about his own territories."

"It's just as usual!" said Joe; for to this wretched plight the poor fatalist had come at last. "To be grabbed for begging, the very first time I tried my hand at it! But it's Friday, and that's enough. Some would have got the copper at all events; but it's my luck to beg gratis. I thought it was a last chance, but it a'n't. There's no chance for *me!*"

"Come along," said the constable, "it's only the stocks and a whipping!"

"I expect nothing else," answered Joe. "Such things come nat'ral to me now. I've always my full measure of misfortins, brimful and running over. Some would have had the jaundice, and some would have had the ague, and some would

have had the rheumatiz; nobody but me would have had 'em all three at once, and not the luck neither to be laid out!"

"You needn't tell me a long story," said the pompous constable. "I know every thing; so pick up your rags. His worship will give you a furbishing, I warrant you."

"I don't look for a friend in him," answered Joe. "All the world's agin me, man, woman, and child. I don't know what love or friendship is. But if any body was to take to me, I should only bring bad luck upon 'em; so they're wise to keep off. There's nothing but evil for me in this world, and maybe the same in t'other—God knows."

With this dreary desponding sentiment, the poor, ragged, crippled, lean, ghastly, yellow being got up into a half-stooping position, and in this deplorable posture halted feebly after the constable, to receive his new portion of affliction and stripes.

In the meantime Sir Walter continued his gallop, which he afterwards changed to a canter, and then to a trot; but, with a view of dissipating his chagrin, instead of turning off to the Hall, he prolonged his

ride by taking a road towards Hollington, a course which brought him into the vicinity of Squire Ned. He recollected himself, however, as the grotesque chimneys of the Cottage appeared above the trees; and, with an inclination to avoid an encounter with its owner, he was turning away by a side lane, when a clatter of horses' heels caused him to turn his head, and he beheld the Squire galloping towards him at full speed. With a vague misgiving, for which he was unable to account, Sir Walter instantly pricked his own horse into a gallop; but Ned's quick eye had detected him at a distance, and before the Creole had gone two hundred yards, he heard the other horse turn into the same lane.

With the consciousness that he was pursued, and aware of the Squire's determined hostility, he again urged his steed to the top of his speed; but he had to contend with a daring and experienced rider, and a horse much fresher than his own. Every moment the sound gained upon him; but the high mettled animal that bore him made play gallantly, and whenever the clatter approached

him, he made fresh and desperate efforts to maintain his lead. The rider's heart, meanwhile, beat fast as his horse's hoofs; the first indistinct flinching impulse that had induced him to flight, increased in intensity with the arduousness of the struggle, and as he found Cadeau straining under him to the utmost stretch of his powers, he felt the thrilling excitement of one who was racing for his life. The sight of a high gate closing the end of the lane, suggested a doubt that was solved almost as soon as formed. Cadeau flew over it like a bird!—the rider, who had held his breath in the suspense of expectation, gave a gasp of delight. But the leap was fatal to the speed of the now jaded horse. It shook him; his sinews were over-strained, and his pace suddenly declined. He was lame. Aware that he must now be inevitably overtaken, Sir Walter pulled up at once, and set himself erect in the saddle, somewhat in scorn, now the hurry of rapid motion had ceased, of the groundless terrors that had lately possessed him. A few minutes brought the Squire beside him, panting from the recent struggle. It took him a while to collect

breath enough to speak, and the unusual harshness of his voice, when the words came at last, had a startling effect on the ear of the Creole.

"Must be a better than Cadeau to beat Barney —with revenge on his back!"

Sir Walter looked at the speaker; his teeth were set, and his one eye was glimmering with an unquiet light. These were evil omens; and the misgivings of the Baronet returned in all their force. He determined to avoid, or postpone if possible, the impending discussion, whatever might be its nature. They were now in the nook of an extensive heath, which was traversed at some distance by the high-road to the metropolis; and in this direction the eye of Sir Walter involuntarily glanced, but no coach was in sight, no stir of human life was visible, save one solitary pedestrian far off, who was moving along the heath. The Creole drew himself up more stiffly in his seat, and looking steadfastly straight before him, so as to avoid seeing his companion, he spoke with a slight but dignified wave of the hand.

"Sir Walter Tyrrel declines all personal communication with Mr. Somerville."

"And Mr. Somerville," returned the Squire, speaking with a guttural sound, as if every syllable grated in his throat, "will have no further communication with Sir Walter Tyrrel. He is now plain Wat, and may soon be less than that."

"The old story," said the Baronet, smiling scornfully, as he became relieved of worse fears. "I have said, sir, that the ridiculous claim you allude to must be settled by proxy. My professional agent will meet yours."

"But suppose I should insist on a personal conference, under pain of personal consequences?" asked Ned, in a cooler tone, with a significant side-glance at his companion.

"I should resist and chastise so insolent a freedom," returned Sir Walter, but with a falter in his voice.

"Try it on then," ejaculated Ned, suddenly throwing himself off his own horse, and seizing the bridle of the other. It was effected so momentarily, that the confounded Baronet forgot to raise his whip, or to use the spur.

"Five minutes in words with you, or you lose your seat!"

"If I comply with your humour," said Sir Walter, reddening, "it is only because I am loth to forget the gentleman in the ruffian. But I choose to prefer another time. Come to me at the Hall."

"Now or never," answered the Squire, with a slight stamp of the foot; "here, or nowhere."

"You presume on my last concession, Sir," said the Baronet; "but have your way; courtesy shall be stretched on my side, to atone for the want of it on yours."

"Dismount," said the Squire.

A hot blush of rage and shame flushed the face of Sir Walter, as he slowly complied with this brief mandate; but whatever courage he possessed, was undermined by fear and guilt. He knew the rottenness of his foundation; and his spirit did not rise as he saw the Squire lead the two horses to the gate, to which he fastened them with peculiar care. After this operation had been deliberately performed, Ned returned slowly back with his face turned towards the earth, and each hand plunged into the ample pockets of his green shooting-jacket.

He stopped full in front of the Creole, upon whom he fixed his one eye in dead silence. A minute passed, and he did not speak or stir; another, and another, and another. It has been said that no animal, not even the lion excepted, can withstand the fixed settled gaze of the human eye, without much restlessness and some fear; and if these be tokens of their inferiority to man, the Creole was degraded to the level of the brute. He flinched—he trembled, under the solitary orb that was scanning him:—he could almost have turned and fled. But all suspense is worse than certainty, and he hastened to speak with affected indifference.

"Now then, Sir, for the birth, pedigree, and performances of your tattered protegé."

"That is gone by," said the Squire, with a hollow voice. "I have two graver questions to put. Where is Ringwood?" and his right hand drew a long duelling-pistol from his pocket. "Where is Raby?" and his other hand produced the fellow weapon.

"Good God!" exclaimed Sir Walter, turning pale and recoiling a step or two backwards, "Do you mean to murder me?"

"It would be in your own line," answered Ned, between his teeth; "but foul as it was, you shall have fair play. One of us two must die on this turf."

"No!" said Sir Walter, averting his head, with a corresponding gesture of his hands, "there has been blood enough shed—by accident!"

"You lie, monster! you lie!" cried the Squire, with a terrible voice, thrilling with passion. "Think of your cousins;—think of Sir Mark. If you had three lives I'd take them all! You shall die the death of a dog!"

"Mr. Somerville," said Sir Walter, but he visibly trembled, and his voice was almost a croak; "my dear Squire, you are misled. Let us at least explain before we cast away our lives upon a mistake. Inform me of the grounds of your baseless suspicions: appearances may be against me, which a few words would remove."

"Read that, and then that," answered the Squire, handing a couple of letters, "and then remove what you may!"

The Creole took the papers with a trembling hand, and, opening the first, read as follows:—

"DEAR SQUIRE—The enclosed was seized, amongst other papers, by the creditors of a deceased swindler and gambler. As a fellow sufferer, I had access to the documents, and the one I send only lately excited my attention. It obviously refers to some deep villany, and as I know you to be a very old intimate at Tylney Hall, I place the enclosed at your discretion.

"Your friend and fellow-sportsman,

"HARRY L. CAREW."

A glance at the second paper sufficed to shake the least nerve in the frame of the Creole: it was his own letter to Woodley, containing the outline of his own ambitious schemes, and his commendation of Raby to his confederate's care,—like the dove to the protection of the falcon. The crisis of his fate was come. His teeth chattered, and the hair rose on his head. The earth seemed opening under him as a living grave, and a precocious death-sweat broke out upon his forehead. But one chance remained, and he seized it with the desperation of a ruined man.

"I adopt your alternative—give me a pistol."

"Take your choice," said Ned, "all right—loaded an hour ago!" and he tendered the weapons with the enviable serenity of a good conscience. He was as cool, and his hand as steady, as if he had been only going to shoot at a target, instead of a living antagonist. The enormous guilt of the latter made the act the Squire contemplated seem a righteous one, in which he was but the instrument of the divine judgment on a murderer. Sir Walter, in the meantime, had selected a weapon, and stood irresolute, as if revolving what should be the nature of his next step. His pistol once rose a little upward, but it instantly dropped again by his side.

"Long shot or short?" said the Squire, "name your own distance."

"Twelve paces," said Sir Walter; "or fifteen," he added, unconsciously acknowledging the deadly skill of his opponent.

The Squire made no reply, but proceeded to measure off the required distance, the double click of the Creole's weapon, as he put it upon full-cock, striking upon his ear as he completed the third stride; the sixth had hardly been taken, when the

report rang, and the bullet whistled close by the Squire's head.

Ned stopped short and wheeled round. His eye glanced fiercely for an instant at the assassin; the fatal barrel rose to its unerring level—a slight touch of the forefinger did the rest, and, after a convulsive leap, Sir Walter Tyrrel fell on his back on the grass, with a ball through his body.

In a moment Ned was bending over him, but not in remorse or pity. "One word, villain, for your soul's sake," he said; "did you see HIM in the fern?"

"I did—God forgive me!" said the dying man, rolling himself over as he completed the confession, so as to lie with his face downwards.

"Then die! the sooner the better," and a blow from the butt end of the Squire's pistol sped the parting spirit in its exit. The savage act spoke terribly the awful amount of misery and anguish to be avenged—the complicated debt that even death was insufficient to expiate; one life for three, for the fate of Sir Mark was implicated in that of his sons. The avenger was influenced by

this dreadful reckoning when he gave way to an impulse of which he repented the next moment. He rose up, and was standing musing intently over the shocking spectacle before him, when a rustling made him aware of the approach of the foot passenger, who, it will be remembered, had been seen at a distance crossing the heath. He came up out of breath.

"I am too late," he panted, "I hoped to prevent bloodshed. But what do I see?—the Squire!"

Ned turned and looked intently at the speaker, but he could not recognise him. He wore a blue coat and trowsers, resembling the undress costume of a naval officer; and his face seemed weather-beaten and toil-worn, and embrowned by exposure to hot suns and the sharp sea air. Still there was something familiar in the features, as there had been in the voice of the stranger, that made the Squire examine him narrowly: and when the true thought at last dawned upon his mind, he literally gasped as he gave it utterance—

"God!—alive! Raby Tyrrel!

CHAP. XII.

" Do you live? Can you feel this pinch, can you see this hand I hold up? Could you smell out a red-herring? Should you hear a clap of thunder? Are you hot or cold,—would you jump out of the grate, like a parched pea, or turn blue and red in a north wind? Above all, are you hungry and thirsty? Would your mouth water now at a fat capon with truffles—would your lips smack after a cup of canary? In good plain substantial English—are you alive?"

THE GHOST OF GORHAMBURY.

" Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

Thus let me hold thee to my heart
And every care resign,—
And shall we never, never part!
My life—my all that's mine!

No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true,
The sigh that rends thy constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too."

GOLDSMITH.

THE Squire guessed aright. It was Raby Tyrrel who stood before him, erect and breathing, whilst—so strange and mysterious are the ways

of Providence—the clay of the false kinsman who had plotted against his life, lay motionless at his feet, like the clod of the valley. He instantly rushed into the arms of the Squire, who was familiarly associated with the home he returned to seek; and Ned, convinced that he held real flesh and blood in his arms, returned the greeting with considerable warmth. The appearance of the wanderer indicated that, in addition to mental suffering, he had undergone great bodily hardships since his flight; he was now known to be a joint victim with Ringwood of an atrocious scheme;—and it was painful to remember the forlorn state of the Hall, with but one member of the family in existence to welcome him back to the domestic hearth.

"And my father?" asked Raby eagerly, as they sundered.

Ned shook his head, and pointed to the dead body: "Ask him—. But, no—gone different roads."

The querist gazed incredulously at the speaker; his mind was reluctant to adopt such an afflicting

interpretation as the words suggested. He looked from the Squire to the body and back again with a face that asked for explanation.

" Be a man," said Ned. " Hold up—can't tell you else. That viper, there, called himself Sir Walter."

Raby started, for he had not recognised the Creole from the body lying upon its face ; but his amazement was swallowed up in grief as the conviction came upon him that his parent was no more. He covered his face with his hands, and gave way to a violent burst of sorrow, which the taciturn Squire did not attempt to interrupt. He turned away from the mourner, and fixed his eye with a fierce frown upon the lifeless wretch who had been the origin of such desolation, and to so many. His teeth were set, and his hands were clenched as if he mentally spurned as carrion the vile dust before him.

Seldom can a man look down on the corse of a fellow-creature that he has bereaved of life without a sensation of remorse and regret, and a secret wish that he could recall the breath of life in its

nostrils, and restore the flowing blood to its native arteries and veins. But the fiendish deeds of the Creole seemed to have placed him out of the pale of humanity. The slayer viewed the slain as inaccessible to compunction as the weapon he had used: even as the victorious peasant regards the gory carcass of the cruel wild wolf that had ravaged his fair flock. "Ringwood is now in Heaven," he muttered, "and his murderer is in Hell!"

The first stormy vehemence of grief by degrees abated; and Raby assumed the sad composure that belongs to a confirmed sorrow, when the heart has no more to hope or fear. He would not trust himself to look towards an object associated with feelings of horror, affliction, hatred, and abhorrence, but motioned to the Squire, and intimated a wish to leave the dreary scene of this fresh tragedy. The latter took up the pistol which the dead man still retained in his hand, and silently led the way towards the gate, where the horses were in waiting; he replaced the weapons in the holsters, and was soon mounted on Barney, whilst

Raby placed himself in the saddle which the Creole had vacated for ever: but they did not get into motion for a minute or two, for the Squire was musing.

"Not to the Hall," he said, at last, "nobody there—go to Hawksley—your aunt's at the Justice's."

"With Grace?" asked Raby, with quivering lips and a faltering voice, for his heart sunk within him to inquire the fate of the dearest of its ties, when the frail tenure of human life had just been so forcibly impressed upon him.

"Like mother and daughter," answered the Squire, "and much need—both broken-hearted—poor Grace—never held up since she lost——" He was going to add poor Ringwood, but he checked himself in consideration to his companion. Raby was silent, the intensest essences of pain and pleasure were intermingled in the intelligence. It wrung him with anguish to conceive her withering and wasting and losing the very bloom of her youth in sorrow for his sake, and yet her devotion to him, and the evidence she was giving

of her faithful affection in clinging to him when deserted by all the world, thrilled his heart with extasy. He instantly pricked Cadeau into a pace which made the Squire think he must be one of the best of nephews, whom nothing but a hard gallop would serve him in his eagerness to be in the arms of Mrs. Hamilton. In fact, by degrees the two horses increased their speed till it appeared but a second heat of the race that they had so recently struggled in. It was the first time that Raby had appeared in the character of a desperate rider, and the Squire was just conceiving hopes of him as likely to make some day a tolerable master of hounds, at least as far as riding up to them, when to his equal astonishment his companion pulled up so as to throw his horse upon his haunches, and then proceeded at a walk.

"It will be too abrupt," he said to the Squire, "to go to Hawksley in this haste, such a shock might kill her."

"Not she," answered the Squire, his head still running upon the aunt; "got more game in her,—more afraid for Grace when she sees you."

Raby pulled up and thought a little, and at last formed his plan.

"You must go on before, Squire, and prepare them for my coming; do it as tenderly as you can. I dread any sudden agitation in her weak state. Pray keep that in mind: begin with the remotest hints."

"Needn't teach me," said the Squire, with a knowing nod, "soon be there—be off at once—one word though—want to know myself—how did you come alive?"

Raby stared at the speaker.

"Has there been any report of my death?"

"Report eh," said the Squire, "something more, dead and buried—hearse, coffin and all that, was at it myself."

"Buried!" said Raby, with fresh amazement, and gazing intently at the Squire, as if he thought he must be unsettled in his wits.

"Buried regularly," answered Ned; "had old Stubbs on your body, found drowned—family vault—funeral service, and every thing—ask Dr. Cobb."

A suspicion of the truth flashed across Raby's mind in a moment.

"There has been some mistake," he said, "what was the dress?"

"Queer enough," answered Ned, with an involuntary smile; "corded breeches, leather leggings, black silk waistcoat, and swallow-tailed coat."

"I am right," said Raby, "that body, Squire, was poor George the saddler's, I met with him in the forest at a time when I was beset with false terrors. I confessed I was a fugitive for my life, and at his persuasion I partly changed clothes with him."

"That's enough," said Ned, "see through it all—dead by proxy—better luck for you,—follow at a walk."

And away he galloped upon Barney, and was soon out of sight.

Raby was now left to his own reflections, and they were many, and of various complexions. Such is the uneven course of human life, that monotonous years sometimes roll over one's head

which are only distinguishable from each other by their dates in the almanac; and then come thronging events of vital interest and importance, crowded into the space of a few days, nay hours. Thus during one revolution of the long hand upon the dial, Raby had found himself a witness of the fall of his arch enemy, a mourner for the loss of his father, and a lover outstripping the wind to rejoin the mistress of his soul. In such exciting moments, whilst all the passions are conflicting within, the spirit feels and owns its immortality whether for bliss or bale. Instinct with high impulses and powerful energies, the soul feels too godlike to depend with a contingent existence upon a little dust. The outward senses may perish, but the inward feeling is the life of life. In this exalted state of being, Raby was rapt: grief and joy, hope and fear, were panting at their extremest pitch, and the mere material world around was as the shadow of a dream. In a deep reverie he arrived at Hawksley, and Cadeau was left to depart, or remain at the gate at will, with the bridle on his neck, whilst the rider passed through the familiar wicket, and hurried across the front

court, and entered the front door, which was no sooner open to him, than the hall resounded with female shrieks. The Squire, who had executed his mission with admirable tact to Grace and Mrs. Hamilton, had not thought it necessary to break the news to any body else, and accordingly, when Tibbie, who opened the door, beheld the face of Raby, which she instantly recognised, she set up a loud scream, and exclaiming "a wraith! a wraith!" rushed off into the kitchen, to infect all the other servants with her national terrors. Alarmed by this reception, Raby flew up stairs to the drawing room, and in a moment, heedless of any other presence, the betrothed lovers were folded, weeping and silent, in each other's arms. Mrs. Hamilton, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, enjoyed the sight of such an unhoped-for consummation. The stern Justice looked on with a countenance strangely softened; but the astounded Squire actually gave a whistle of surprise, as he asked himself the question.—Was it possible she could have loved the two brothers at once? Of course his reason answered in the negative, but while it relieved Grace from the imputation of fickleness

and double dealing, it was at some expense to her good taste.

"My own, my own dear Grace!" murmured Raby, "do we meet at last?"

And he confessed in his heart, that the present moment repaid him for all his past sufferings, however intense. Grace was unable to speak, but her arms replied for her as they clung more closely round his neck.

"I must claim my share, Raby, in your remembrance," said Mrs. Hamilton, who prudently interfered to divert and moderate the feelings of the young pair, and the aunt and nephew embraced with great affection. The Squire's tact suggested the same course to him, he took the hand of Grace and led her to a chair.

"Kissing enough," he said, "plenty of time before you; cool your heart a bit—mustn't burst it with an overcharge."

"The Squire, is right, Grace," said her father, approaching and fondly patting her on the head—"Compose yourself a little now, and be as happy afterwards as I wish you."

He then went and warmly welcomed his

adopted son-in-law, whose reappearance was to restore his beloved daughter from that grave to which she seemed rapidly hastening. The lustrous eyes of Grace, and the happy tint which had already revived upon her cheek, amply repaid the parent for his kindness, whilst he enjoyed the removal of a burthen of self-reproach which had weighed heavily on his mind. Even the Squire, though his satisfaction was damped by looking more backward than the others, rejoiced that a vestige was left of the brave old house of Tyrrel. He rubbed his hands, walked restlessly up and down, and, finally, gave Raby a slap on the back, wishing him joy as Sir Raby Tyrrel, with this awkward compliment.

"Glad you've turned up, boy,—ought to have been otherwise,—must feel that,—but better than nobody at all."

In the meantime the lovers regarded each other with earnest interest, mutually noting the alterations in each other's appearance. Grace was particularly struck with the brown hue of Raby's countenance, hinting foreign travel, and she yearned to be at liberty to listen to the narrative of his hardships,

and recompense him with her sympathy for his past sorrows, and Mrs. Hamilton shared in the same wish. The Justice shortly after retiring with the Squire to his study, to consult upon what was to be done with the Creole's body, and to concert subsequent measures, Raby entered upon the subject of his wanderings, and gave a hasty sketch of his fortunes and adventures. He could not, of course, trace the moral effect of his variegated course upon himself, wherefore an abstract shall be given with a commentary. To pass over, as he did, the catastrophe which made him a fugitive, and the horrors of the subsequent stormy night, spent in the open forest, on the following day he arrived at Woodley's, in St. James's Street, who, according to the instructions of the Creole, received him with every demonstration of kindness and interest in his fate. Intense anxiety and hurry were affected and the very next morning he was shipped with a hundred pounds in his pocket, and fictitious letters of recommendation, on board of a vessel which which was going, it was professed, on a voyage of discovery, where Raby's talents, his skill in

drawing, and his love of botany, would make him an acquisition. The captain, however, was a notorious kidnapper, and the ship had proceeded but half way on her destination, when she was seized by an armed sloop that had been sent off in pursuit of her, at the instigation of the relatives of a young man of family who was missing. Thus was Raby saved probably from the dreadful fate of becoming a slave in the Plantations. The youth they were in quest of, however, was not on board, but Raby, whose eyes were opened to his danger, took refuge in the sloop, the captain of which happened to be an old schoolfellow. He was a kind hearted, generous, and shrewd man; and he soon detected that some secret grief was preying upon the mind of his passenger, who, in the course of a few weeks, acquired his warmest regard and esteem. By degrees he won Raby's entire confidence, and in the dreadful story that was confided to him, the captain, a veteran in the ways of life, immediately suspected villany, and eventually brought Raby over to his own opinion. The feelings of the latter underwent an immediate change; indignation and disgust took the place

of remorse and self-reproach; his mind was re-strung, while the sharp bracing sea air invigorated his frame. He had besides to take a share in stirring events and active labour. A dreadful storm had compelled every hand on board to work at the pumps; and on another occasion the attack of a celebrated pirate, notorious for never giving quarter, armed every hand for its life, and Raby, in extreme contrast to all his former habits, found himself fighting foot to foot, and dealing wounds and destruction on savages in the shape of men. The effect of these compulsory exertions was very salutary, the energies of his mind and body were aroused, his spirit rallied, and the gentle Raby lost a portion of his gentleness which he could well spare. He determined even to do vengeance on his treacherous kinsman, and kept earnest watch for the white cliffs of his country with mingled yearnings. But the return of the sloop was delayed by counter orders received at sea, and the impatience of the exile made him embark himself on board a small merchantman which was soon after taken by a French privateer. A new prospect now opened upon him of being a prisoner, perhaps

for life, in a foreign dungeon; when, even in sight of the French coast, an English gun-brig hove in sight, and, after a short but animated chase, and a long and desperate action, the privateer struck, and Raby again found himself at liberty amongst his countrymen. A fishing smack set him on shore, with slender means and without credentials, on the coast of his native country, and a great part of his journey towards the Hall had been made on foot. Such rapid vicissitudes of fortune, however trying and attended with agony, had been of the most signal benefit, bodily and mentally, to his constitution; like the practice of a skilful but severe surgeon, they had removed all the morbid parts that prevented the healing of his wounds. He aroused from the dreary abstractions of poetry, to the stern practical prose of human life, and was an altered man. But his head had changed not his heart; his views were different, not his feelings. With the same old love for the really beautiful and really good, he had learned to detect and abhor their simulants: with the same tenderness and gentleness as before towards the tender and gentle, he had acquired a spirit of active not

passive resistance to the violent and the unjust. It is a modern discovery, that a hard blow will render any bar of iron magnetic when held in a due direction, and by something of the same hammering process, his heart had acquired its complete polarity of attraction and repulsion. He had only loved formerly, but in addition, he now hated, in the moral acceptation of that word by Doctor Johnson; and he had become, to adopt an expressive phrase of the Fancy, "good with both hands." In the more apposite words of Miranda, in the Tempest, in reference to her beloved Ferdinand, the affectionate Grace could apply the same perfect character to her restored lover that he was "gentle and not fearful."

In justification of this theory, Raby's eyes glowed as he described the sea-fight with the pirate, and how, contending for life, liberty, and love, he slew the chief renegade with his own sword. His hands were clenched, and his teeth set, as he mentioned St. Kitts; and his foot even stamped as he confessed that his first object on touching English ground was to stretch his murderous kinsman on its turf. But then he melted like a woman when he spoke of his father and

brother, and the sufferings of his dear Grace; he was still the same affectionate merciful being, in love with all creatures, however minute, that were harmless and unoffending. He had no longer any spurious sensibility, it is true: he would have shot a hare, a pheasant, or a partridge, but he would not "needlessly set foot upon a worm."

On the anniversary of Raby's return, he was united to Grace Rivers, an union that promised the more felicity as the parties had already fulfilled that universal condition of human happiness, that it shall be alloyed with grief. Their bliss was as perfect as it was pure, and as they stood together at the altar, the young couple might have adopted the beautiful lines quoted in "The Old Couple:—"

> "Blest happiness!—*Gently, my joys, distil,*
> *Lest ye do break the vessel you should fill!*"

POSTSCRIPT.

THE postscript of a letter is generally supposed to contain the subjects nearest to the writer's heart; but in a novel, on the contrary, it merely glances usually at the fate and fortunes of the subordinate characters of the *Dramatis Personæ*. Briefly, then, be it said, that a Coroner's verdict of "Justifiable Homicide" absolved the Squire from all legal consequences on account of the death of the Creole. The evidence of Raby, in proof of the unfair conduct of the deceased, in shooting so prematurely, partly inducing the jury to give such a sentence. Ned, however, was considerably embarrassed by having his *protegé* left upon his hands, whose claims had been superseded by the return of a nearer Heir to the Hall; but from this difficulty he was extricated by the poor student himself. For some time he maintained a decent exterior and correct conduct; but one unlucky day the influence of his old habits prevailed, and for the ensuing week he was never sober for an hour. Occasionally, Mr. Twigg had the mortification of seeing his cousin ranting before his door, "with his tail on," as the Highlanders say of their chieftains, for there was always a troop of boys laughing, capering, and shouting after Tom in Tatters. This annoyance, added to the failure of all their country speculations, gave a disgust to the Ex-Sheriff and his family; they suddenly found out that the air of Hollington did not agree with them,—the Hive was sold at less than prime cost,—and they returned to the metropolis, where the blue and orange

liveries, and the bright brass bees, were paraded every Sunday in Hyde Park. Matilda gave her hand to a rich soap-boiler; and T. junior married a housemaid, to the utter dismay of his family, and their displeasure was aggravated by his defence. She was "a tight little one," he said: "twice as much of a lady as his mother; and as a beauty, beat 'Tilda all to sticks."

Similar to the fate of Tom in Tatters was that of Unlucky Joe, who also found a patron. The new Baronet tried to mend his fortune by installing him in the porter's lodge at the Hall; but though luck came at last, it arrived too late.

The poor fatalist, in his way to take possession, was knocked down, and run over by the last of all vehicles that ought to run away, a broad-wheeled wagon. Strange to say, his misfortunes arrived at this climax, corresponding with his own superstitious forebodings, on a Friday, and on that very Friday, too, which, in the Christian calendar, is described as Good!

The remains of Indiana slept undiscovered for years, and when found at last, presented merely a human skeleton enveloped in faded silk. Her name and origin were unknown, and she was never spoken of, but as the Queen of the Gipsies, nor was any human being conscious of the secret influence she had exercised over the fate of two generations of the family that inherited TYLNEY HALL.

THE END.

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